Theory of the Novel

A Historical Approach

Edited by Michael McKeon



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Acknowledgments

The idea for this anthology arose from a seminar I began teaching fifteen years ago at Boston University. Its basic shape and aim were present from the beginning. In several stages through which the seminar evolved, however—first at BU and then at Rutgers University—there have been significant changes in the selections. Fifteen of the authors now reprinted were not represented in the original readings, while an equal number—including essays by Robert Alter, Rene Girard, Lucien Goldmann, Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, Tony Tanner, Rene Wellek, Hayden White, and Emile Zola—for one reason or another do not appear here. Three years ago it occurred to me that this had become a course others might like to teach as well; the result is *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach.*

My greatest debt is to the students who over the years have helped me think through the issues engaged by these essays. Two Rutgers students, in particular—Deborah Allen and Bob Bettendorf—gave me invaluable editorial aid in transforming the course into a book. From the Johns Hopkins University Press, I've had sympathetic and expert help, most of all from Jackie Wehmueller, who shepherded the anthology from its uncertain origins to its present state with unfailing generosity and kindness. My deep thanks to her and to Kim Johnson.

Introduction

"The theory of the novel" is a deceptively simple notion; the more it's pondered the less self-evident it becomes. No doubt this is because its component terms are themselves more difficult than they first appear to be. In common commercial usage—think of the section headings in most bookstores—you're likely to find the novel you're looking for under the heading "Fiction" ("Romance" and "Mysteries," let alone "Poetry," reside under separate headings). And in common academic usage there's a tendency to conflate "the novel" not only with "fiction" but also with "narrative."[1] The difficulty with the term "theory," on the other hand, is one not of inclusion but of exclusion. Over the past few decades, as "literary theory" has become increasingly central to literary studies, its singularity more often than not is defined against, among other things, "literary history."

One way of confronting questions about the scope of categories like these is to ask what a given term seems, by standard definition, to rule out. "Fiction" rules out factuality; "narrative" rules out discourse that isn't told, or whose telling doesn't take the form of a story. In other words, both "fiction" and "narrative" are evidently a good deal broader than "the novel," which isn't the only path either to fiction or to narration. Why does common usage often imply it is?

Again, "theory" is a process of abstraction that most obviously rules out concrete practice—in this case, either the practical composition of novels or the practical activity of criticizing, interpreting, and reading them. But by this standard, the theory of the novel would seem compatible enough with another process of abstraction, that involved in deriving from particular novels a notion of their more general historical relationships. In fact, "theory" and "history" might appear to complement, even interpenetrate, each other. Why does common usage imply they don't?

The answers to both these questions may be clarified by recalling some relatively recent developments. It has been argued that over the course of the last two centuries, the novel has become so dominant that its popularity has tended to obscure the importance, and the ongoingness, of other forms of fictional narrative. To speak of the novel, it came to appear, was to speak of

1. Consider the practice of previous anthologies in the theory of the novel, which include, without discriminating between, both essays on the novel genre and essays on the narrative mode: Philip Stevick, ed., *The Theory of the Novel* (New York: Free Press, 1967); John Halperin, ed., *The Theory of the Novel: New Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Michael J. Hoffman and Patrick D. Murphy, eds., *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction,* 2d ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, [1988] 1996).

narrative "as such." Four decades ago, however, there was a powerful reaction against this general tendency. Dissatisfied with the dominance of the novel, scholars began (in the words of one influential study) "to put the novel in its place, to view the nature of narrative and the Western narrative tradition whole, seeing the novel as only one of a number of narrative possibilities."[2] But although broadly successful in achieving this aim, the campaign for "narrative" overlapped with another scholarly movement which, conjoined with it, has had the paradoxical effect of reinforcing from another direction the confusion of "fictional narrative" with "the novel."

This second movement, the rise of structuralism and poststructuralism, directed its critique not at the novel but, more generally, at the perceived weakness of theoretical understanding in literary studies. Still, the repercussions for novel study were considerable. Central to this critique is the nature of language, the constitutive basis of literature. Broadly construing "theory" as an exercise in questioning the categories by which cultures uncritically understand themselves, structuralism and poststructuralism looked (to be sure, with very different emphases) to the operation of language for rules by which to challenge the authority of what it saw as unselfcritical historical practice—not just local and temporary literary usages, but the categories of "genre" and "literature" themselves. The effect was not only (in general) to divorce theoretical from historical study but also (in particular) to redirect attention away from kinds of narrative that, like the novel genre, have a specific historical character, and toward narrative as such, from whose general language use, it was thought, might be derived a broad understanding unclouded by the specific biases of more narrowly historical practice. As a result, during the past few decades interest in the theory of the novel as a literary-historical genre has been replaced by interest in narrative or "narratology," the study of verbal narrative technique as it cuts across the chronological and disciplinary divides of historical practice. Treated as a local instance of a more universal activity, the novel has been subsumed within narrative in such a way as to obscure or ignore its special, "generic" and "literary," properties.

The purpose of *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach* is to rectify this imbalance by collecting together and reprinting essays by a wide range of authors who have worked from different directions to establish an idea of the coherence of the novel genre as a historical phenomenon. In this sense they all take as their premise the need to "put the novel in its place," even if their focus in doing this is less the broad category of narrative in which the novel has a relatively limited place than the placement of the novel in its own particular historical contingency and context. For the novel genre to be "coherent" in these terms requires that it fulfill the demands that pertain to all historical things: namely, that it display both the continuity of an integral entity and, within that continuity, the discontinuity that confirms its existence over time and space, its capacity to change without changing into something else.

2. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 3.

As an exercise in rebalancing, *Theory of the Novel* omits many authors familiar to the reader from other treatments of the subject, and includes many others whose centrality—even, whose relevance—to the theory of the novel may be unfamiliar. Given the historical orientation of this anthology, the best-known narratologists (Roland Barthes, Seymour Chatman, Gerard Genette, A. J. Greimas, Gerald Prince, Vladimir Propp, Robert Scholes, Viktor Shklovsky, Tzvetan Todorov) are not directly represented. Scholars working within the structuralist and poststructuralist traditions who do appear, or whose influence is felt, in these pages are likely to be those whose very attention to the general principles of language use has encouraged them to inquire into the special principles of novelistic usage.

If *Theory of the Novel* is relatively uncommon for the readings it brings together, it's also unusual, perhaps, for the explicitness with which the accompanying commentary seeks to elaborate, on the basis of those readings, its own syncretic theory of the novel. The point is not simply to make visibly active the truth that all anthologies, if only in their principles of selection, take a position on the subject which they also aim to represent broadly and "impartially"—that is, as a whole. Indeed, my own aim here is (in this sense of the term) the impartial representation of a historical, hence generic, theory of the novel. To this end, however, the headnotes to each part of the anthology provide not only an interpretive framework for their respective readings but also a continuous and developing argument concerning the historical theory of the novel in general.

Central to the theorization of the novel as a historical entity is the premise that the novel, the quintessentially modern genre, is deeply intertwined with the historicity of the modern period, of modernity itself. The organization of this anthology is therefore "historical," but not in the most obvious sense of that term. Although it would be possible to proceed chronologically from the earliest (eighteenth-century) to the most recent efforts to theorize the novel as a genre, a different procedure has been followed here. Instead, all of the readings date from the twentieth century and most from the last forty years, and all of them take their shape, in one way or another, as efforts to theorize the novel with—and under the weight of—the historical consciousness of its significance (whether conceived in positive or negative terms) as a modern phenomenon. A brief summary of this organization may now be useful.

As a preliminary inquiry needed for what follows, the first part collects readings in genre theory that help establish what it means to study a literary category as a historical category, and why the idea of genre is crucial to that study. The following two parts concern the problem of the origins of the novel. More specifically, what are the theoretical implications of competing versions of the novel's early modern origins: for example, structuralist and psychoanalytic views of the novel as "devolutionary"; developmental views of the novel as "evolutionary"; efforts to implicate the origins of the novel in the technology of print and the growth of print culture? While continuing to pursue the question of origins, the anthology turns in parts 4 through 6 to the three most seminal, "grand theorists" of the novel, each of whom grounds an account of

the distinctive qualities of the genre in an account of its historical emergence. These three parts are followed by one that includes the work of more recent theorists who seek, in different ways, to revise the grand theorists by a more concrete or specific historicization of the novel's origins.

The sociocultural implications of this revision are deepened, in part 8, by readings that speak to the novel's early—and especially its nineteenth-century—associations with privacy, individuality, and domesticity, and that link these associations to women and to values increasingly defined as feminine. Part 9 deepens this sociocultural matrix in another way, by construing it in an epistemological and psychological direction, so that the central issues become the novel's association with the modern excavation of interiority as subjectivity, of character as personality and selfhood, and of plot as the progressive development of the integral individual. Crucial to these readings is, among other things, an account of the invention and significance of "free indirect discourse," arguably the most important technical innovation in the formal history of the novel.

The readings contained in part 10 concern novelistic epistemology as such: the doctrine of realism as formulated by the early theory of the novel, sophisticated by that of the nineteenth-century novel, and refracted by modernist and postmodernist theory. This part also takes up the question of how the novel travels. What do the classic American novelists mean in calling their narratives not novels but "romances"? What light do theoretical developments like these cast on the transportability of the genre (and its theory) from its West European locus of origin? The question of transportability recurs in the final part of the anthology where, as here, the Anglophone novel serves as the test case.[3] Part 11 both recurs to the hypothesis of a fundamental technological influence on the novel form—now not of print but of photography and film—and thereby also extends the issue of novelistic epistemology.

In the paradoxical "novel tradition," each stage in the novel's development purports to evince a radical novelty that simultaneously affirms and denies the coherence of the genre as a whole. In parts 12 and 13, varieties of modernism and postmodernism display the inveterate impulse of novel theory toward the recapitulation, in other terms, of founding claims to novelty. The final part returns to the topic of transportability. What happens to the novel and its theorization once they travel beyond their "first" colony—the United States—and become rooted in Anglophone Africa, India, and Latin America? As it has been debated in recent years, this question has become inseparable from another question: What's the relation between postmodernism and postcolonialism?

In providing the guidance alluded to above, the headnotes to the parts of the anthology elaborate and pursue a method of inquiry whose nature and purpose deserve some final explanatory remarks.

3. Space limitations require exemplifying one among several language traditions. More generally, in those instances where the more particular evidence available in an exemplary language tradition seems called for (e.g., in pt. 10's treatment of realism), my choice of the Anglophone novel has been dictated by my own area of expertise. Specialists in other language traditions may test the applicability of the basic theoretical argument to their own fields of concentration.

A Note on Dialectical Method

From Plato to Marx and beyond, "dialectic" has a long and varied history. Because I seek both to explain, and to practice, a dialectical method in the headnotes to this anthology, it's important that the reader be clear on what I mean, and on what I don't mean, by that term.

Most important, "dialectical method" as I use it is not a doctrine but a method of inquiry. My use of "dialectic" is derived most directly (but by no means exclusively) from Marx's writings, which are of course nothing if not doctrinal. But it's a dialectical truth that method can be provisionally separated from doctrine, so that the locally doctrinal implications of method play a relatively minor role in the process of inquiry. Western—and especially American—readers are accustomed to seeing dialectic as deductive, reductive, and teleological. According to this view, dialectical method is a technique for closing down inquiry, not opening it up. It's deductive in that it imposes an abstract, predetermined scheme of understanding on what it seeks to understand; this is inevitably a reductive process because it simplifies and falsifies complex phenomena; and it's teleological in that it assumes, as part of its own procedure, the results it purports to discover outside itself. For many readers, a formulaic model for this sort of dialectic is the familiar "Hegelian" progression from thesis to antithesis to synthesis. Posited from the outset, such a method finds what it wants to find, not what's there, and it shapes what it finds according to a progressive ("synthesizing") model of improvement that's predictable, even inevitable.

Dialectical method as I seek to practice it here is, instead, a technique of discovery that proceeds by dividing wholes into parts and by disclosing wholes within parts. Beginning with any integral category ("the novel," "literature," "labor," "the nation," "gender"), it seeks to understand how, and under what conditions, that category is usefully seen both as composed of constituent parts and as one part of a larger whole. Its open-endedness consists in the fact that only the method of inquiry, and not the matter to which it's applied, is set in advance. True, results depend on how far the inquiry is pursued, as well as on the choice of matter to which it's applied (the form of the question preselects the nature of the answer); and in this sense dialectical method is unavoidably fueled by its own *telos*. But in this sense of the term all inquiry is teleological (see below, headnote to pt. 1, on the hermeneutic circle); and dialectical method is unusual for the explicitness with which it acknowledges the contingency of its choices by incorporating the provisional nature of all categories, of all wholes and parts, into its procedure. The Hegelian formula becomes truly dialectical when method recognizes that all "theses" are also the result of prior syntheses, and that all "syntheses" are also emergent theses. At the center of that formula, "antithesis" captures the contradictory moment of dialectic as the combination of opposites: position as negation, identity as difference, the whole as incomplete part, the part as integral whole.

With Hegel and Marx, "dialectic" became associated in particular with "history," and "dialectical" method with "historical" method. This association has been fruitful, I think, not because dialectic conceives history as a cleanly

divided three-part whole (thesis-antithesis-synthesis, feudal-capitalist-socialist), but because dialectic provides the most economical and reflexive method for understanding history in its multiplicity, dividing and redividing its manifold according to the requirements of multiple inquiry. Efforts to improve on this capacity of dialectical method, particularly those inspired by poststructuralism, have proceeded on the basis of a reductive and ironic misconception. For in its characteristic critique of other methods, poststructuralist thought unknowingly espouses, in a crude and unsatisfactory form, a procedure that has already been elaborated more precisely and persuasively by the tradition of dialectical inquiry itself.

One example of this can be seen in the tendency of Foucauldian studies to solve the putative problem of an overemphasis on linear continuity in available historiography by overemphasizing discontinuity, rather than by setting continuity and discontinuity in dialectical relation (see below, chs. 19, 25). Another example can be seen in the structuralist tendency to posit an unprovisional and absolute division between "history" and "structure," rather than viewing history rightly understood as the dialectical whole of "history" and "structure," diachrony and synchrony (see below, ch. 11).

Because I take dialectical method to be the most fruitful approach to historical study, my justification for pursuing it both in these readings and in my headnotes to them is that my present aim is to practice a historical approach to the theory of the novel. This is to say not that history is dialectical but that dialectics is the best means for disclosing what we mean by "history."

Notes by the editor of this collection are designated "M. McK."

Part One

Genre Theory

What's at stake in pursuing "the theory of the novel" as an exercise in genre theory rather than narrative theory or "narratology"? What's at stake is history. The study of genre is a "historical approach" to literature because it understands literary categories in their contingency. The contingency of genres has several dimensions. Conceived as integral structures, genres have a temporal and spatial existence that defines the scope of their identity; conceived as parts of greater wholes, genres have a structural existence in relation to other integral formations. That is, genres are formal structures that have a historical existence in the sense that they come into being, flourish, and decay, waxing and waning in complex relationship to other historical phenomena. Genres are contingent in the sense that they aren't necessary: neither their nature nor their transformation, neither their continuity nor their discontinuity, can be predicated in advance.

Moreover genres are contingent in the sense that they're models for making formal choices within a larger realm of formal determinacy. In Claudio Guillén's words, "a genre is an invitation to form"—more precisely, "an invitation to the matching . . . of matter and form" where "matter" is understood to be not "content" but language "already shot through with formal elements." The determinacy of a genre consists in the way the formal idea it implies evokes how this matching process has already been achieved in a broad range of past literary practice. But "a preexistent form can never be simply 'taken over' by the writer or transferred to a new work. . . . The writer must begin once more to match matter to form, and to that end he can only find a very special sort of assistance in the fact that the fitting of matter to form has *already* taken place. To offer this assistance is the function of genre." A genre is therefore "a problem-solving model on the level of form."

Guillén helpfully reminds us of some of the other literary categories to which genre may be compared. The classification of literature by theme or content, he suggests, is "irrelevant" to the peculiar formal concerns of genre; matters of technique and craftsmanship are "peripheral," or perhaps "introductory," to those concerns. The literary category most commonly juxtaposed with genre is the formal category "mode" or "universal." Aristotle is the source for our division of literary discourse into the three basic categories "lyric," "drama," and "narrative." These three modes are basic in the sense that they purport to cover the logical range of possibility: for the poet may either speak in a single voice, or represent two or more voices in dialogue, or alternate

between these two modes.[1] If genres are historical, modes are transhistorical. Genres change; modes do not. Whereas genres are contingent and conventional, modes are "necessary" or "natural," an inescapable consequence of discourse itself, models not for the solution but for the initial articulation of problems of form.

Why has the theory of the narrative mode proved more compelling, in the last few decades, than the theory of the novel genre? Northrop Frye gives one answer to this question by suggesting—in 1957—that the dominance of the novel in modern times has resulted in a "novel-centered view of prose fiction" by which diverse narrative forms are reduced to the single, culturally normative model of the novel. His own "theory of genres" seeks to remedy this imbalance by situating the lesser, generic category within the encompassing category of mode.[2] The procedure by which Frye elaborates the several sorts of narrative is based on the salutary principle that texts should be judged according to "the categories to which they belong." The procedure itself combines a sense of empirical investigation (the categories emerge from the examination of texts) with a finally more decisive sense of taxonomic deduction, whereby texts are seen to conform to a pre-existent, synchronic grid of possibility: "[W]hen we examine fiction from the point of view of form, we can see four chief strands binding it together. . . . The six possible combinations of these forms all exist, and we have shown how the novel has combined with each of the other three." As a result, the contingency of the several genres of narrative tends to be subsumed and effaced by the aura of necessity surrounding narrative as such; chronological historicity is flattened into logical schematism.[3]

With Frye's taxonomic view of genre may be contrasted E. D. Hirsch's hermeneutic view of it. Although his concern is not with genre theory, Hirsch provides an account of genre that deepens our understanding of its contingency at the most local level of compositional and interpretive practice. Hermeneutics is the study of how meaning is constructed through interpretation. For Hirsch, the way genres work provides a good paradigm for such meaning construction. Indeed, "[a]ll understanding of verbal meaning is necessarily genre-bound." Like Guillén, Hirsch would see genre as an invitation to match one thing with another—in his words, the particular meaning or "traits" of a text with the general "type" of meaning we bring to it by way of our "meaning expectations." Hirsch explains more fully the generality of "type of meaning" as the "intrinsic genre" of any utterance, the "entire, complex system of shared experiences, usage traits, and meaning expectations which the speaker relies on" to communicate a particular meaning to a readership.

1. Aristotle, *Poetics,* 1448a. Guillén notes Frye's useful term for mode, "radical of presentation."

2. To avoid confusion it should be noted here that Frye's usage is unusual in that he employs the term "genre" to refer to what we would call the "mode" of narrative (or "prose fiction"), whereas the novel he designates a "species" of that genre (or "genus"). In discussing Frye I retain the common usage.

3. See Guillén on this problem. In the following section Frye's view of genre will be complicated by adding to this synchronic taxonomy his influential exercise in diachronic chronology.

Genre is intrinsic in the sense that although manifold, it's only indirectly available: "the intrinsic genre is always construed, that is, guessed, and is never in any important sense given." Generic matching is not a once-for-all achievement but a back-and-forth movement between general meaning expectations and particular traits—between a generic category and a particular text—until a satisfactory matching has been attained. Like Guillén, Hirsch invokes the hermeneutic circle as a principle that doesn't so much challenge understanding as underlie it. And like Guillén, Hirsch sees the rootedness of genre within past practice as fully compatible with—indeed, as the precondition for—the development of new genres through processes of "amalgamation" and "extension."

If Frye helps us attribute a prevalent dissatisfaction with genre theory to the modern dominance of the novel, Jonathan Culler suggests an even more contemporary cause. Distinguishing between the "readable" and the "unreadable" text, Culler proposes that the latter be understood as "non-genre literature" because its unconventionality evades what Hirsch would call the "meaning expectations" of its readers. The distinction grows out of poststructuralist standards of textual indeterminacy and self-referentiality. These standards are most directly exemplified in postmodern literature; and although Culler's non-genre literature is by no means limited to postmodern writing, he concludes by observing that it is "central to the contemporary experience of literature." This is nowhere more true than in the genre of the novel. For poststructuralism, the novel genre has traditionally fostered and indulged those illusions of external representation that postmodern fiction labors to dispel.[4] By the same token, poststructuralist thought has been unremitting in its efforts to demystify the category of "genre" itself as a superstitious constraint on authorial and readerly innovation, and to replace the arbitrary dogmas of genre theory by the transhistorical sweep of narratology.

The poststructuralist critique of genre may be seen as our most recent version of a disenchantment with the "system of genres" that began in the early modern period and that culminated—in its first manifestation—with the romantic movement. The modern disenchantment with genre is coextensive with the modern valorization of free innovation as such. In the present context, it may be useful to understand the modern decay of genre in terms of the discord between the hermeneutic and the taxonomic views of genre. The traditional experience of genre as an enabling condition of discursive practice has been overbalanced, we might say, by the modern view that genre is a grid imposed, on writer and reader alike, from without. Certainly those needs which the idea of a non-genre literature is formulated to meet—and crucially the need to allow for innovation—are already available in the principle of contingency that informs the idea of genre itself.

Paradoxically enough, the early modern decay of genre also coincides with the emergence of the novel genre. What's the relationship between our late-twentieth-century recourse to the notion of a non-genre literature and the way the novel has been theorized, for most of its history, as a genre singu-

4. See below, chs. 26, 37.

larly deficient in generic identity? Marthe Robert's concise account of common attitudes toward the novel as a paradoxical genre focuses attention on the startling, and socially resonant, figures of speech often used to describe it. The novel is figured as a newcomer, an upstart, a commoner made good who verges on the status of a heroic outlaw; an imperial invader, usurper, and colonizer, at once totalitarian and leveling; a parasite that cannibalistically feeds off other, legitimate forms for its own illicit sustenance. Moreover, the indeterminacy of the genre only invites greater efforts at circumscription. These metaphors concretize an anomalous condition: possessed of a tyrannical freedom, the novel both lacks form and eclectically overincorporates it to such a degree that one is tempted to "consider each work as an isolated case," a "trait" in search of a "type." But isn't this simply the condition of "genreness"? Acknowledging this, Robert suggests nonetheless that the problem is more "natural" to the novel, which is "more vulnerable than most traditional forms to the restrictions moral censorship would impose on imagination's freedom and lawlessness." History, ethics, truth—"all such extra-literary categories are erected as so many 'courts of justice' before which the novel is summoned."

Robert's acute observations invite some preliminary speculation. Why aren't traditional genres subject to this sort of adjudication? Perhaps because the idea of an "extraliterary" category—indeed, of a separable "literary" category—is itself foreign to traditional culture. What looks like the special vulnerability of the novel may rather be one of its special functions: the role of enacting for modern culture the meaning of freedom as a negative quantity, a "freedom from" what exists over against it. The modern shift in the idea of genre—from an enabling hermeneutic to a constraining taxonomy—is coextensive with the emergence of the novel because it marks a similar separation out of what formerly was held in relation. In fact, the novel is the great modern genre because it explicitly articulates a problem in "matching" that is only tacit, hence non-problematic, in traditional genre theory. The novel crystallizes genreness, self-consciously incorporating, as part of its form, the problem of its own categorial status. What makes the novel a different sort of genre may therefore be not in its "nature" but in its tendency to reflect on its nature—which of course alters its nature in the process. Robert's suggestive remarks about the doubleness expressed by the French phrase *faire un roman* may provide one key to the way this self-reflective tendency of the novel is manifested: through the matching of duplicity and upward mobility; the behavior of the author and that of the character; novelistic form and content.

1

Northrop Frye

From Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays

In assigning the term fiction to the genre of the written word, in which prose tends to become the predominating rhythm, we collide with the view that the real meaning of fiction is falsehood or unreality. Thus an autobiography coming into a library would be classified as non-fiction if the librarian believed the author, and as fiction if she thought he was lying. It is difficult to see what use such a distinction can be to a literary critic. Surely the word fiction, which, like poetry, means etymologically something made for its own sake, could be applied in criticism to any work of literary art in a radically continuous form, which almost always means a work of art in prose. Or, if that is too much to ask, at least some protest can be entered against the sloppy habit of identifying fiction with the one genuine form of fiction which we know as the novel.

Let us look at a few of the unclassified books lying on the boundary of "non-fiction" and "literature." Is *Tristram Shandy* a novel? Nearly everyone would say yes, in spite of its easygoing disregard of "story values." Is *Gulliver's Travels* a novel? Here most would demur, including the Dewey decimal system, which puts it under "Satire and Humor." But surely everyone would call it fiction, and if it is fiction, a distinction appears between fiction as a genus and the novel as a species of that genus. Shifting the ground to fiction, then, is *Sartor Resartus* fiction? If not, why not? If it is, is *The Anatomy of Melancholy* fiction? Is it a literary form or only a work of "non-fiction" written with "style"? Is Borrow's *Lavengro* fiction? Everyman's Library says yes; the World's Classics puts it under "Travel and Topography."

The literary historian who identifies fiction with the novel is greatly embarrassed by the length of time that the world managed to get along without the novel, and until he reaches his great deliverance in Defoe, his perspective is intolerably cramped. He is compelled to reduce Tudor fiction to a series of tentative essays in the novel form, which works well enough for Deloney but makes nonsense of Sidney. He postulates a great fictional gap in the seventeenth century which exactly covers the golden age of rhetorical prose. He finally discovers that the word novel, which up to about 1900 was still the name of a more or less recognizable form, has since expanded into a catchall term which can be applied to practically any prose book that is not "on" something. Clearly, this novel-centered view of prose fiction is a Ptolemaic perspec-

tive which is now too complicated to be any longer workable, and some more relative and Copernican view must take its place.

When we start to think seriously about the novel, not as fiction, but as a form of fiction, we feel that its characteristics, whatever they are, are such as make, say, Defoe, Fielding, Austen, and James central in its tradition, and Borrow, Peacock, Melville, and Emily Bronte somehow peripheral. This is not an estimate of merit: we may think *Moby Dick* "greater" than *The Egoist* and yet feel that Meredith's book is closer to being a typical novel. Fielding's conception of the novel as a comic epic in prose seems fundamental to the tradition he did so much to establish. In novels that we think of as typical, like those of Jane Austen, plot and dialogue are closely linked to the conventions of the comedy of manners. The conventions of *Wuthering Heights* are linked rather with the tale and the ballad. They seem to have more affinity with tragedy, and the tragic emotions of passion and fury, which would shatter the balance of tone in Jane Austen, can be safely accommodated here. So can the supernatural, or the suggestion of it, which is difficult to get into a novel. The shape of the plot is different: instead of manoeuvering around a central situation, as Jane Austen does, Emily Bronte tells her story with linear accents, and she seems to need the help of a narrator, who would be absurdly out of place in Jane Austen. Conventions so different justify us in regarding *Wuthering Heights* as a different form of prose fiction from the novel, a form which we shall here call the romance. Here again we have to use the same word in several different contexts, but romance seems on the whole better than tale, which appears to fit a somewhat shorter form.

The essential difference between novel and romance lies in the conception of characterization. The romancer does not attempt to create "real people" so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes. It is in the romance that we find Jung's libido, anima, and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine, and villain respectively. That is why the romance so often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks, and why a suggestion of allegory is constantly creeping in around its fringes. Certain elements of character are released in the romance which make it naturally a more revolutionary form than the novel. The novelist deals with personality, with characters wearing their *personae* or social masks. He needs the framework of a stable society, and many of our best novelists have been conventional to the verge of fussiness. The romancer deals with individuality, with characters *in vacuo* idealized by revery, and, however conservative he may be, something nihilistic and untamable is likely to keep breaking out of his pages.

The prose romance, then, is an independent form of fiction to be distinguished from the novel and extracted from the miscellaneous heap of prose works now covered by that term. Even in the other heap known as short stories one can isolate the tale form used by Poe, which bears the same relation to the full romance that the stories of Chekhov or Katherine Mansfield do to the novel. "Pure" examples of either form are never found; there is hardly any modern romance that could not be made out to be a novel, and vice versa. The forms of prose fiction are mixed, like racial strains in human beings, not separable like the sexes. In fact the popular demand in fiction is always for a

mixed form, a romantic novel just romantic enough for the reader to project his libido on the hero and his anima on the heroine, and just novel enough to keep these projections in a familiar world. It may be asked, therefore, what is the use of making the above distinction, especially when, though undeveloped in criticism, it is by no means unrealized. It is no surprise to hear that Trollope wrote novels and William Morris romances.

The reason is that a great romancer should be examined in terms of the conventions he chose. William Morris should not be left on the side lines of prose fiction merely because the critic has not learned to take the romance form seriously. Nor, in view of what has been said about the revolutionary nature of the romance, should his choice of that form be regarded as an "escape" from his social attitude. If Scott has any claims to be a romancer, it is not good criticism to deal only with his defects as a novelist. The romantic qualities of *The Pilgrim's Progress,* too, its archetypal characterization and its revolutionary approach to religious experience, make it a well-rounded example of a literary form: it is not merely a book swallowed by English literature to get some religious bulk in its diet. Finally, when Hawthorne, in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables,* insists that his story should be read as romance and not as novel, it is possible that he meant what he said, even though he indicates that the prestige of the rival form has induced the romancer to apologize for not using it.

Romance is older than the novel, a fact which has developed the historical illusion that it is something to be outgrown, a juvenile and undeveloped form. The social affinities of the romance, with its grave idealizing of heroism and purity, are with the aristocracy (for the apparent inconsistency of this with the revolutionary nature of the form just mentioned, see the introductory comment on the *mythos* of romance in [my] previous essay). It revived in the period we call Romantic as part of the Romantic tendency to archaic feudalism and a cult of the hero, or idealized libido. In England the romances of Scott and, in less degree, the Brontes, are part of a mysterious Northumbrian renaissance, a Romantic reaction against the new industrialism in the Midlands, which also produced the poetry of Wordsworth and Burns and the philosophy of Carlyle. It is not surprising, therefore, that an important theme in the more bourgeois novel should be the parody of the romance and its ideals. The tradition established by *Don Quixote* continues in a type of novel which looks at a romantic situation from its own point of view, so that the conventions of the two forms make up an ironic compound instead of a sentimental mixture. Examples range from *Northanger Abbey* to *Madame Bovary* and *Lord Jim.*

The tendency to allegory in the romance may be conscious, as in *The Pilgrim's Progress,* or unconscious, as in the very obvious sexual mythopoeia in William Morris. The romance, which deals with heroes, is intermediate between the novel, which deals with men, and the myth, which deals with gods. Prose romance first appears as a late development of Classical mythology, and the prose Sagas of Iceland follow close on the mythical Eddas. The novel tends rather to expand into a fictional approach to history. The soundness of Fielding's instinct in calling *Tom Jones* a history is confirmed by the general rule that the larger the scheme of a novel becomes, the more obviously its

historical nature appears. As it is creative history, however, the novelist usually prefers his material in a plastic, or roughly contemporary state, and feels cramped by a fixed historical pattern. *Waverley* is dated about sixty years back from the time of writing and *Little Dorrit* about forty years, but the historical pattern is fixed in the romance and plastic in the novel, suggesting the general principle that most "historical novels" are romances. Similarly a novel becomes more romantic in its appeal when the life it reflects has passed away: thus the novels of Trollope were read primarily as romances during the Second World War. It is perhaps the link with history and a sense of temporal context that has confined the novel, in striking contrast to the worldwide romance, to the alliance of time and Western man.

Autobiography is another form which merges with the novel by a series of insensible gradations. Most autobiographies are inspired by a creative, and therefore fictional, impulse to select only those events and experiences in the writer's life that go to build up an integrated pattern. This pattern may be something larger than himself with which he has come to identify himself, or simply the coherence of his character and attitudes. We may call this very important form of prose fiction the confession form, following St. Augustine, who appears to have invented it, and Rousseau, who established a modern type of it. The earlier tradition gave *Religio Medici, Grace Abounding,* and Newman's *Apologia* to English literature, besides the related but subtly different type of confession favored by the mystics.

Here again, as with the romance, there is some value in recognizing a distinct prose form in the confession. It gives several of our best prose works a definable place in fiction instead of keeping them in a vague limbo of books which are not quite literature because they are "thought," and not quite religion or philosophy because they are Examples of Prose Style. The confession, too, like the novel and the romance, has its own short form, the familiar essay, and Montaigne's *livre de bonne foy* is a confession made up of essays in which only the continuous narrative of the longer form is missing. Montaigne's scheme is to the confession what a work of fiction made up of short stories, such as Joyce's *Dubliners* or Boccaccio's *Decameron,* is to the novel or romance.

After Rousseau—in fact in Rousseau—the confession flows into the novel, and the mixture produces the fictional autobiography, the *Künstlerroman,* and kindred types. There is no literary reason why the subject of a confession should always be the author himself, and dramatic confessions have been used in the novel at least since *Moll Flanders.* The "stream of consciousness" technique permits of a much more concentrated fusion of the two forms, but even here the characteristics peculiar to the confession form show up clearly. Nearly always some theoretical and intellectual interest in religion, politics, or art plays a leading role in the confession. It is his success in integrating his mind on such subjects that makes the author of a confession feel that his life is worth writing about. But this interest in ideas and theoretical statements is alien to the genius of the novel proper, where the technical problem is to dissolve all theory into personal relationships. In Jane Austen, to take a familiar instance, church, state, and culture are never examined except as

social data, and Henry James has been described as having a mind so fine that no idea could violate it. The novelist who cannot get along without ideas, or has not the patience to digest them in the way that James did, instinctively resorts to what Mill calls a "mental history" of a single character. And when we find that a technical discussion of a theory of aesthetics forms the climax of Joyce's *Portrait,* we realize that what makes this possible is the presence in that novel of another tradition of prose fiction.

The novel tends to be extroverted and personal; its chief interest is in human character as it manifests itself in society. The romance tends to be introverted and personal: it also deals with characters, but in a more subjective way. (Subjective here refers to treatment, not subject-matter. The characters of romance are heroic and therefore inscrutable; the novelist is freer to enter his characters' minds because he is more objective.) The confession is also introverted, but intellectualized in content. Our next step is evidently to discover a fourth form of fiction which is extroverted and intellectual.

We remarked earlier that most people would call *Gulliver's Travels* fiction but not a novel. It must then be another form of fiction, as it certainly has a form, and we feel that we are turning from the novel to this form, whatever it is, when we turn from Rousseau's *Emile* to Voltaire's *Candide,* or from Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* to the Erewhon books, or from Huxley's *Point Counterpoint* to *Brave New World.* The form thus has its own traditions, and, as the examples of Butler and Huxley show, has preserved some integrity even under the ascendancy of the novel. Its existence is easy enough to demonstrate, and no one will challenge the statement that the literary ancestry of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Candide* runs through Rabelais and Erasmus to Lucian. But while much has been said about the style and thought of Rabelais, Swift, and Voltaire, very little has been made of them as craftsmen working in a specific medium, a point no one dealing with a novelist would ignore. Another great writer in this tradition, Huxley's master Peacock, has fared even worse, for, his form not being understood, a general impression has grown up that his status in the development of prose fiction is that of a slapdash eccentric. Actually, he is as exquisite and precise an artist in his medium as Jane Austen is in hers.

The form used by these authors is the Menippean satire, also more rarely called the Varronian satire, allegedly invented by a Greek cynic named Menippus. His works are lost, but he had two great disciples, the Greek Lucian and the Roman Varro, and the tradition of Varro, who has not survived either except in fragments, was carried on by Petronius and Apuleius. The Menippean satire appears to have developed out of verse satire through the practice of adding prose interludes, but we know it only as a prose form, though one of its recurrent features (seen in Peacock) is the use of incidental verse.

The Menippean satire deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes. Pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds, are handled in terms of their occupational approach to life as distinct from their social behavior. The Menippean satire thus resembles the confession in its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories, and differs from the novel in its characterization, which is

stylized rather than naturalistic, and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent. Here again no sharp boundary lines can or should be drawn, but if we compare a character in Jane Austen with a similar character in Peacock we can immediately feel the difference between the two forms. Squire Western belongs to the novel, but Thwackum and Square have Menippean blood in them. A constant theme in the tradition is the ridicule of the *philosophus gloriosus,* already discussed. The novelist sees evil and folly as social diseases, but the Menippean satirist sees them as diseases of the intellect, as a kind of maddened pedantry which the *philosophus gloriosus* at once symbolizes and defines.

Petronius, Apuleius, Rabelais, Swift, and Voltaire all use a loose-jointed narrative form often confused with the romance. It differs from the romance, however (though there is a strong admixture of romance in Rabelais), as it is not primarily concerned with the exploits of heroes, but relies on the free play of intellectual fancy and the kind of humorous observation that produces caricature. It differs also from the picaresque form, which has the novel's interest in the actual structure of society. At its most concentrated the Menippean satire presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern. The intellectual structure built up from the story makes for violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative, though the appearance of carelessness that results reflects only the carelessness of the reader or his tendency to judge by a novel-centered conception of fiction.

The word "satire," in Roman and Renaissance times, meant either of two specific literary forms of that name, one (this one) prose and the other verse. Now it means a structural principle or attitude, what we have called a *mythos.* In the Menippean satires we have been discussing, the name of the form also applies to the attitude. As the name of an attitude, satire is, we have seen, a combination of fantasy and morality. But as the name of a form, the term satire, though confined to literature (for as a *mythos* it may appear in any art, a cartoon, for example), is more flexible, and can be either entirely fantastic or entirely moral. The Menippean adventure story may thus be pure fantasy, as it is in the literary fairy tale. The Alice books are perfect Menippean satires, and so is *The Water-Babies,* which has been influenced by Rabelais. The purely moral type is a serious vision of society as a single intellectual pattern, in other words a Utopia.

The short form of the Menippean satire is usually a dialogue or colloquy, in which the dramatic interest is in a conflict of ideas rather than of character. This is the favorite form of Erasmus, and is common in Voltaire. Here again the form is not invariably satiric in attitude, but shades off into more purely fanciful or moral discussions, like the *Imaginary Conversations* of Landor or the "dialogue of the dead." Sometimes this form expands to full length, and more than two speakers are used: the setting then is usually a *cena* or symposium, like the one that looms so large in Petronius. Plato, though much earlier in the field than Menippus, is a strong influence on this type, which stretches in an unbroken tradition down through those urbane and leisurely conversations which define the ideal courtier in Castiglione or the doctrine and discipline of angling in Walton. A modern development produces the country-

house weekends in Peacock, Huxley, and their imitators in which the opinions and ideas and cultural interests expressed are as important as the love-making.

The novelist shows his exuberance either by an exhaustive analysis of human relationships, as in Henry James, or of social phenomena, as in Tolstoy. The Menippean satirist, dealing with intellectual themes and attitudes, shows his exuberance in intellectual ways, by piling up an enormous mass of erudition about his theme or in overwhelming his pedantic targets with an avalanche of their own jargon. A species, or rather sub-species, of the form is the kind of encyclopedic farrago represented by Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists* and Macrobius' *Saturnalia,* where people sit at a banquet and pour out a vast mass of erudition on every subject that might conceivably come up in a conversation. The display of erudition had probably been associated with the Menippean tradition by Varro, who was enough of a polymath to make Quintilian, if not stare and gasp, at any rate call him *vir Romanorum eruditissimus.* The tendency to expand into an encyclopedic farrago is clearly marked in Rabelais, notably in the great catalogues of torcheculs and epithets of codpieces and methods of divination. The encyclopedic compilations produced in the line of duty by Erasmus and Voltaire suggest that a magpie instinct to collect facts is not unrelated to the type of ability that has made them famous as artists. Flaubert's encyclopedic approach to the construction of *Bouvard et Pecuchet* is quite comprehensible if we explain it as marking an affinity with the Menippean tradition.

This creative treatment of exhaustive erudition is the organizing principle of the greatest Menippean satire in English before Swift, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy.* Here human society is studied in terms of the intellectual pattern provided by the conception of melancholy, a symposium of books replaces dialogue, and the result is the most comprehensive survey of human life in one book that English literature had seen since Chaucer, one of Burton's favorite authors. We may note in passing the Utopia in his introduction and his "digressions," which when examined turn out to be scholarly distillations of Menippean forms: the digression of air, of the marvellous journey; the digression of spirits, of the ironic use of erudition; the digression of the miseries of scholars, of the satire on the *philosophus gloriosus.* The word "anatomy" in Burton's title means a dissection or analysis, and expresses very accurately the intellectualized approach of his form. We may as well adopt it as a convenient name to replace the cumbersome and in modern times rather misleading "Menippean satire."

The anatomy, of course, eventually begins to merge with the novel, producing various hybrids including the *roman à these* and novels in which the characters are symbols of social or other ideas, like the proletarian novels of the thirties in this century. It was Sterne, however, the disciple of Burton and Rabelais, who combined them with greatest success. *Tristram Shandy* may be, as was said at the beginning, a novel, but the digressing narrative, the catalogues, the stylizing of character along "humor" lines, the marvellous journey of the great nose, the symposium discussions, and the constant ridicule of philosophers and pedantic critics are all features that belong to the anatomy.

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make a good many elements in the history of literature come into focus. Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy,* with its dialogue form, its verse interludes and its pervading tone of contemplative irony, is a pure anatomy, a fact of considerable importance for the understanding of its vast influence. *The Compleat Angler* is an anatomy because of its mixture of prose and verse, its rural *cena* setting, its dialogue form, its deipnosophistical interest in food, and its gentle Menippean raillery of a society which considers everything more important than fishing and yet has discovered very few better things to do. In nearly every period of literature there are many romances, confessions, and anatomies that are neglected only because the categories to which they belong are unrecognized. In the period between Sterne and Peacock, for example, we have, among romances, *Melmoth the Wanderer;* among confessions, Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner;* among anatomies, Southey's *Doctor,* Amory's *John Buncle,* and the *Noctes Ambrosianae.*

To sum up then: when we examine fiction from the point of view of form, we can see four chief strands binding it together, novel, confession, anatomy, and romance. The six possible combinations of these forms all exist, and we have shown how the novel has combined with each of the other three. Exclusive concentration on one form is rare: the early novels of George Eliot, for instance, are influenced by the romance, and the later ones by the anatomy. The romance-confession hybrid is found, naturally, in the autobiography of a romantic temperament, and is represented in English by the extroverted George Borrow and the introverted De Quincey. The romance-anatomy one we have noticed in Rabelais; a later example is *Moby Dick,* where the romantic theme of the wild hunt expands into an encyclopedic anatomy of the whale. Confession and anatomy are united in *Sartor Resartus* and in some of Kierkegaard's strikingly original experiments in prose fiction form, including *Either/Or.* More comprehensive fictional schemes usually employ at least three forms: we can see strains of novel, romance, and confession in *Pamela,* of novel, romance, and anatomy in *Don Quixote,* of novel, confession, and anatomy in Proust, and of romance, confession, and anatomy in Apuleius.

I deliberately make this sound schematic in order to suggest the advantage of having a simple and logical explanation for the form of, say, *Moby Dick* or *Tristram Shandy.* The usual critical approach to the form of such works resembles that of the doctors in Brobdingnag, who after great wrangling finally pronounced Gulliver a *lusus naturae.* It is the anatomy in particular that has baffled critics, and there is hardly any fiction writer deeply influenced by it who has not been accused of disorderly conduct. The reader may be reminded here of Joyce, for describing Joyce's books as monstrous has become a nervous tic. I find "demogorgon," "behemoth," and "white elephant" in good critics; the bad ones could probably do much better. The care that Joyce took to organize *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* amounted nearly to obsession, but as they are not organized on familiar principles of prose fiction, the impression of shapelessness remains. Let us try our formulas on him.

If a reader were asked to set down a list of the things that had most impressed him about *Ulysses,* it might reasonably be somewhat as follows. First,

the clarity with which the sights and sounds and smells of Dublin come to life, the rotundity of the character-drawing, and the naturalness of the dialogue. Second, the elaborate way that the story and characters are parodied by being set against archetypal heroic patterns, notably the one provided by the *Odyssey.* Third, the revelation of character and incident through the searching use of the stream-of-consciousness technique. Fourth, the constant tendency to be encyclopedic and exhaustive both in technique and in subject matter, and to see both in highly intellectualized terms. It should not be too hard for us by now to see that these four points describe elements in the book which relate to the novel, romance, confession, and anatomy respectively. *Ulysses,* then, is a complete prose epic with all four forms employed in it, all of practically equal importance, and all essential to one another, so that the book is a unity and not an aggregate.

This unity is built up from an intricate scheme of parallel contrasts. The romantic archetypes of Hamlet and Ulysses are like remote stars in a literary heaven looking down quizzically on the shabby creatures of Dublin obediently intertwining themselves in the patterns set by their influences. In the "Cyclops" and "Circe" episodes particularly there is a continuous parody of realistic patterns by romantic ones which reminds us, though the irony leans in the opposite direction, of *Madame Bovary.* The relation of novel and confession techniques is similar; the author jumps into his characters' minds to follow their stream of consciousness, and out again to describe them externally. In the novel-anatomy combination, too, found in the "Ithaca" chapter, the sense of lurking antagonism between the personal and intellectual aspects of the scene accounts for much of its pathos. The same principle of parallel contrast holds good for the other three combinations: of romance and confession in "Nausicaa" and "Penelope," of confession and anatomy in "Proteus" and "The Lotos-Eaters," of romance and anatomy (a rare and fitful combination) in "Sirens" and parts of "Circe."

In *Finnegans Wake* the unity of design goes far beyond this. The dingy story of the sodden HCE and his pinched wife is not contrasted with the archetypes of Tristram and the divine king: HCE is himself Tristram and the divine king. As the setting is a dream, no contrast is possible between confession and novel, between a stream of consciousness inside the mind and the appearances of other people outside it. Nor is the experiential world of the novel to be separated from the intelligible world of the anatomy. The forms we have been isolating in fiction, and which depend for their existence on the commonsense dichotomies of the daylight consciousness, vanish in *Finnegans Wake* into a fifth and quintessential form. This form is the one traditionally associated with scriptures and sacred books, and treats life in terms of the fall and awakening of the human soul and the creation and apocalypse of nature. The Bible is the definitive example of it; the Egyptian Book of the Dead and the Icelandic Prose Edda, both of which have left deep imprints on *Finnegans Wake,* also belong to it.

2

E. D. Hirsch

From Validity in Interpretation

Genre and the Idea of the Whole

The central role of genre concepts in interpretation is most easily grasped when the process of interpretation is going badly or when it has to undergo revision: "Oh! you've been talking about a book all the time. I thought it was about a restaurant," or "I thought I understood you, but now I'm not so sure." Such flashes of insight or accessions of puzzlement always follow a common pattern. The meaning that is being understood has been revealing itself normally, more or less according to expectations, until quite unexpected types of words or locutions begin to occur. When that happens an interpreter can either revise everything he has understood thus far and grasp a new and different type of meaning or he can conclude that, whatever the meaning might be, he has not understood it. Such experiences, in which a misunderstanding is recognized during the process of interpretation, illuminate an extremely important aspect of speech that usually remains hidden. They show that, quite aside from the speaker's choice of words, and, even more remarkably, quite aside from the context in which the utterance occurs, the details of meaning that an interpreter understands are powerfully determined and constituted by his meaning expectations. And these expectations arise from the interpreter's conception of the type of meaning that is being expressed.

By "type of meaning" I do not, of course, intend to imply merely a type of message or theme or anything so simple as a mere content. The interpreter's expectations embrace far more than that. They include a number of elements that may not even be explicitly given in the utterance or its context, such as the relationship assumed to exist between the speaker and interpreter, the type of vocabulary and syntax that is to be used, the type of attitude adopted by the speaker, and the type of inexplicit meanings that go with the explicit ones. Such expectations are always necessary to understanding, because only by virtue of them can the interpreter make sense of the words he experiences along the way. He entertains the notion that "this is a certain type of meaning," and his notion of the meaning as a whole grounds and helps determine his understanding of details. This fact reveals itself whenever a misunderstanding is suddenly recognized. After all, how could it have been recognized unless the interpreter's expectations had been thwarted? How could anything surprising or puzzling occur to force a revision of his past understanding unless the interpreter had expectations that could be surprised or thwarted? Further-

more, these expectations could have arisen only from a genre idea: "In this type of utterance, we expect these types of traits." Since the expectations do not arise out of nowhere, they must, for the most part, arise from past experience: "In this type of utterance, we expect these types of traits because we know from experience that such traits go with such utterances."

The decisive function of generic expectations can be illustrated by a very simple example in which the interpretation of a poem was controlled not only by a subtle mistake in identifying a particular type of simile but also by a genre mistake in confusing one type of farewell with another. What struck me very forcibly when I encountered this misconstruction in a classroom was the difficulty I had in convincing students that their construction was wrong. They remained convinced that Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" was being spoken by a dying man, and that it concerned spiritual communion in death and after death. The opening lines of the poem are:

> As virtuous men pass mildly away,
> And whisper to their souls to go,
> Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
> 'Now his breath goes,' and some say 'No,'
>
> So let us meet and make no noise,
> No tear-floods nor sigh-tempests move.

In the center of the poem, the theme of union-in-absence does nothing to dispel the thought that death is a main theme:

> Our two souls therefore, which are one,
> Though I must go, endure not yet
> A breach.

And the idea of death is further confirmed in the final lines:

> Thy firmness makes my circle just,
> And makes me end where I begun.

Many readers will no doubt remain convinced that death is a principal theme of the poem, though it is almost certainly about a temporary physical absence, and the speaker is almost certainly not a dying man.

My students remained convinced of the contrary because there was nothing in the text which compelled them to change their minds. Everything they found was legitimately capable of supporting their construction. Having begun with a faulty conception of the type of meaning being expressed, they found all their expectations fulfilled. They had assumed that the word "mourning" in the title must apply to death. Subsequently, the image of a dying man in the first lines confirmed that assumption, as did everything else in the poem. Needless to say, when the poem is interpreted under a less mortuary conception, the various images, similes, and arguments take on different meanings, and these are also legitimately supported by the text. This experience strongly suggested to me that an interpreter's preliminary generic conception of a text is constitutive of everything that he subsequently under-

stands, and that this remains the case unless and until that generic conception is altered.

This phenomenon should not be regarded as a special pitfall limited to the interpretations of untrained readers. That is the comforting but delusive faith of some interpreters who believe in the semantic autonomy of texts. A self-critical interpreter knows better. Emil Staiger once made a public confession of the way a faulty generic conception of a poem had caused him for a long period subtly to misconstrue it. He had been preparing to include a short text in a collection of poems under the assumption that it was an old folksong, and it was only after some research that he discovered it to be a mid-nineteenth-century love poem. This changed his understanding of the text considerably: "Now, subsequently, I find that even the first line is far too weak and mood-ridden for an old folksong. The sweet and mild wind that carries the complaint touches the very boundary of late Romantic tenderminded-ness. . . . Having found out where the poem belongs, I have, as it were amplified its sound by historical resonances. Now I hear every detail exactly."[1]

This point was systematically demonstrated in a book which undertook to defend quite a different thesis—I. A. Richards' *Practical Criticism.* When Richards, in order to show the inadequacies of literary schooling in England, asked a number of undergraduates to write interpretations of some unfamiliar poems given to them without titles or attributions, the results were, naturally enough, widely divergent. Richards believed that better trained students would not disagree so absurdly, but the results of a new *Practical Criticism* containing interpretations by better trained students would very probably disappoint Professor Richards. The vocabulary of the interpretations would be different but the divergences and discrepancies would be much the same. For *Practical Criticism* really demonstrated that without helpful orientations like titles and attributions, readers are likely to gain widely different generic conceptions of a text, and these conceptions will be constitutive of their subsequent understanding. Since their interpretations will substantially depend on their guesses about the type of meaning expressed, and since in the absence of guideposts these guesses will vary widely, it is inevitable that Richards' experiment will always produce similar results. An interpreter's notion of the type of meaning he confronts will powerfully influence his understanding of details. This phenomenon will recur at every level of sophistication and is the primary reason for disagreements among qualified interpreters.

This seems to suggest that an interpretation is helplessly dependent on the generic conception with which the interpreter happens to start, but such a conclusion would be misleadingly simple and despairing, as the occasional recognition of misunderstandings proves. If the generic idea of the meaning as a whole could not be defeated and baffled by the experience of subsequent details, then we would never recognize that we had misunderstood. On the other hand, it is essential to notice that in most cases our expectations are not baffled and defeated. We found the types of meanings we expected to find, because what we found was in fact powerfully influenced by what we expected. All along the way we construe *this* meaning instead of *that* because *this* mean-

ing belongs to the type of meaning we are interpreting while *that* does not. If we happen to encounter something which can only be construed as *that,* then we have to start all over and postulate another type of meaning altogether in which *that* will be at home. However, in the very act of revising our generic conception we will have started over again, and ultimately everything we understand will have been constituted and partly determined by the new generic conception. Thus, while it is not accurate to say that an interpretation is helplessly dependent on the generic conception with which an interpreter happens to start, it is nonetheless true that his interpretation is dependent on the last, unrevised generic conception with which he starts. All understanding of verbal meaning is necessarily genre-bound.

This description of the genre-bound character of understanding is, of course, a version of the hermeneutic circle, which in its classical formulation has been described as the interdependence of part and whole: the whole can be understood only through its parts, but the parts can be understood only through the whole. This traditional formulation, however, clouds some of the processes of understanding in unnecessary paradox. It is true that an idea of the whole controls, connects, and unifies our understanding of parts. It is also true that the idea of the whole must arise from an encounter with parts. But this encounter could not occur if the parts did not have an autonomy capable of suggesting a certain kind of whole in the first place. A part—a word, a title, a syntactical pattern—is frequently autonomous in the sense that some aspect of it is the same no matter what whole it belongs to. A syntactical inversion such as "Fair stands the wind for France" is perceived as an inversion no matter where it occurs, and knowing that such an inversion belongs in a certain type of utterance and not in another, we experience the invariant aspect of the part as a trait which characterizes one type of meaning rather than another. Then, having experienced that trait, we come to expect others belonging to the same type, and this system of expectations, at first vague, later more explicit, *is* the idea of the whole that governs our understanding. Of course, we may make a wrong guess, and, of course, it is true that our guess does control and constitute many of the traits we subsequently experience, but not all traits are genre-dependent (the same ones can belong to different genres), and not everything in verbal understanding is variable. Understanding is difficult, but not impossible, and the hermeneutic circle is less mysterious and paradoxical than many in the German hermeneutical tradition have made it out to be.

Consequently, to define the hermeneutic circle in terms of genre and trait instead of part and whole not only describes more accurately the interpretive process but also resolves a troublesome paradox. This description does, however, raise problems of its own—the most important one being that "genre" still represents an imprecise and variable concept. A generic conception is apparently not something stable, but something that varies in the process of understanding. At first it is vague and empty; later, as understanding proceeds, the genre becomes more explicit, and its range of expectations becomes much narrower. This later, more explicit and narrow generic conception is, to be sure, subsumed under the original, broad generic conception, just as a variety

is subsumed under a species. Nevertheless, a term that is so variable in its application is not yet a theoretically useful term. In the next section one of my chief concerns will be to define the word "genre" more closely.

Intrinsic Genres

The variability of the genre conception is entirely a feature of interpretation, not of speaking. The interpreter has to make a guess about the kind of meaning he confronts, since without this guess he possesses no way of grounding and unifying his transient encounters with details. An individual trait will be rootless and meaningless unless it is perceived as a component in a whole meaning, and this idea of the whole must be a more or less explicit guess about the kind of utterance being interpreted. Genre ideas, then, have a necessary heuristic function in interpretation, and it is well known that heuristic instruments are to be thrown away as soon as they have served their purpose. Nevertheless, a generic conception is not simply a tool that can be discarded once understanding is attained, because, as I pointed out in the preceding section, understanding is itself genre-bound. The generic conception serves both a heuristic and a constitutive function. It is because of this that the genre concept is not hopelessly unstable. For if correct understanding has in fact been achieved, and if understanding is genre-bound, it follows that verbal meaning must be genre-bound as well. A genre conception is constitutive of speaking as well as of interpreting, and it is by virtue of this that the genre concept sheds its arbitrary and variable character.

In what sense is verbal meaning genre-bound? First of all, it is obvious that not only understanding but also speaking must be governed and constituted by a sense of the whole utterance. How does a speaker manage to put one word after another unless his choices and usages are governed by a controlling conception? There must be some kind of overarching notion which controls the temporal sequence of speech, and this controlling notion of the speaker, like that of the interpreter, must embrace a system of expectations. For the words that are to be said are not yet present before the speaker's mind, and the words he has already said have gone by. No one has better described this marvel of consciousness and speech than St. Augustine:

> I am about to repeat a psalm that I know. Before I begin, my expectation alone reaches over the whole: but so soon as I shall have once begun, how much so ever of it I shall take off into the past, over so much my memory also reaches: thus the life of this action of mine is extended both ways: into my memory, so far as concerns that part which I have repeated already, and into my expectation too, in respect of what I am about to repeat now; but all this while is my marking faculty present at hand through which that which was future is conveyed over that it may become past: which the more it progresses forward, so much more the expectation being shortened is the memory enlarged; till the whole expectation be at length vanished quite away, when namely, that whole action being ended, shall be absolutely passed into the memory. What is now done in this whole psalm, the same is done also in every part of it, yea and in every

> syllable of it; the same order holds in a longer action too, whereof perchance this psalm is but a part. (Conf. XI, 28)

Augustine chose as his example a psalm he already knew because ultimately he wanted to make an analogy with God's foreknowledge. But his observation holds true for all utterances, even those for which the system of expectations is far less rigid than that of a memorized utterance.

Is it warranted to call the speaker's controlling idea of the whole a generic conception? Could it not simply be a notion confined to "this particular, unique meaning"? It cannot be so confined for two reasons. First, the controlling conception has a dimension of inexplicitness because the details of the utterance are not present to consciousness all at once. The system of expectations which controls the speaker's sequence of words has at first a range of possible fulfillments. Everyone has noticed that he does not always tell the same story precisely the same way, for even though each telling might be controlled by the same generic conception, the sentences and meanings are usually not precisely the same. The second reason that the speaker's controlling conception must be generic rather than unique is more fundamental. Even when the meaning which the speaker wishes to convey is unusual (and some aspects of his conveyed meaning will almost always be unique) he knows that in order to convey his meaning he must take into account his interpreter's probable understanding. If his interpreter's system of expectations and associations is to correspond to his own, he must adopt usages which will fulfill not only his own expectations but also those of his interpreter. This imaginative transference from the speaker to the interpreter parallels that from the interpreter to the speaker and is called by Bally *dédoublement de la personalité*.[2]

The speaker can achieve this socializing of his expectations only if he is familiar with typical past usages and experiences common to himself and his interpreter. By virtue of these shared past experiences, the type of meaning he expects to convey will be the type of meaning his interpreter will also be led to expect. Obviously, these expectations must belong to a type of meaning rather than merely to a unique meaning, because otherwise the interpreter would have no way of expecting them. Thus, the speaker knows that his type of meaning must be grounded in a type of usage, since it is only from traits of usage, i.e., vocabulary range, syntactical patterns, formulaic invariants, and so on, that the interpreter can expect the speaker's type of meaning. Consequently, types of meaning are always necessarily wedded to types of usage, and this entire, complex system of shared experiences, usage traits, and meaning expectations which the speaker relies on is the generic conception which controls his utterance. Understanding can occur only if the interpreter proceeds under the same system of expectations, and this shared generic conception, constitutive both of meaning and of understanding, is the intrinsic genre of the utterance.

The problem of defining an "intrinsic genre" more fully still remains, and obviously the most difficult aspect of this problem is to discover whether there consistently exists such an entity. Is there really a stable generic concept, con-

stitutive of meaning, which lies somewhere between the vague, heuristic genre idea with which an interpreter always starts and the individual, determinate meaning with which he ends? At first glance the answer seems to be no, since apparently the interpreter's idea of the whole becomes continuously more explicit until the genre idea at last fades imperceptibly into a particularized and individual meaning. If this is so, and if the intrinsic genre is defined as a conception shared by the speaker and the interpreter, it would seem that what I have called the "intrinsic genre" is neither more nor less than the meaning of the utterance as a whole. Obviously, it is a useless tautology to assert that the interpreter must understand the speaker's meaning in order to understand the speaker's meaning. That is a circularity no more helpful than the paradox of the hermeneutic circle as promulgated by Heidegger. If we cannot preserve a distinction between the particular *type* of meaning expressed and the particular meaning itself, then the intrinsic genre becomes simply the meaning as a whole. Nothing but confusion is achieved by calling a particular meaning a "genre."

Yet we seem forced into this paradox by requirements that look powerfully coercive. The interpreter cannot give up his generic idea, since to do so would be to give up everything he has understood by virtue of it. We cannot escape this conclusion by saying that the interpreter first conceives the whole meaning as a type, then subsequently as a particular. That conception fails to consider that a particular meaning must always remain for him a meaning of a particular type, and that this type idea cannot be relinquished without giving up the particular meaning as well. No one can understand "these particular raindrops" without understanding "raindrops." To discard the generic idea "raindrops" by virtue of which "these particular raindrops" was understood in the first place is necessarily to throw away "these particular raindrops" as well.

Could we say, by way of analogy, that "raindrops" is the intrinsic genre of "these particular raindrops"? Such an analogy, which makes its point by word repetition, is by necessity loose and provisional. A phrase is not a whole utterance, and there is no ready-made vocabulary for describing the intrinsic genres of particular utterances. We have no linguistic tools by means of which we could say, "*This* is the intrinsic genre of the meaning, and *that* is the meaning in its particularity." The necessity of an intrinsic genre is a structural necessity in communication and can only be grasped as such; nevertheless, the way that it functions can be made clear. Furthermore, a demonstration of the fact that there are fewer intrinsic genres than there are particular meanings would reveal the distinction between genre and meaning and lay the foundation for a precise and stable definition of an intrinsic genre.

One basis for the distinction between genres and particular meanings can be sought in a consideration that necessitated the genre concept in the first place—the temporal character of speaking and understanding. Because words follow one another sequentially, and because the words that will come later are not present to consciousness along with the words experienced here and now, the speaker or listener must have an anticipated sense of the whole by virtue of which the presently experienced words are understood in their capacity as parts functioning in a whole.[3] The necessity of this anticipated sense of

the whole is in no way obviated by suggesting that a speaker can rehearse what he says before he speaks or that an interpreter can experience the whole of a word sequence before he starts to understand the functions of the words. To make this suggestion is merely to delay the inevitable conclusion, for how can a speaker rehearse words that will be spoken in a sequence unless he rehearses them in a sequence? And how can he do that unless he entertains a system of expectations, by virtue of which he knows that *this* word may be said now because it belongs to the type of phrase or sentence or series of sentences which he expects to continue and complete later? Similarly, from the side of the interpreter, how can he understand the function of the word he experiences now unless he anticipates the type of phrase or sentence or series of sentences in which the word belongs? It does not help to say that his understanding withholds itself until he has completed the phrase, sentence, or series of sentences, for he cannot know what these are until he has understood the functions of the words, and these he cannot understand unless he has anticipated or guessed the type of whole in which they are occurring.

Now the temporality of speech, to which I have been alluding, is an essential condition for distinguishing an intrinsic genre from the meaning that it governs. This can be illustrated conveniently by taking an extreme example, the first lines of *Paradise Lost:*

> Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the World and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us and regain the blissful seat,
> Sing heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
> Of Oreb or of Sinai, didst inspire
> That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed
> In the beginning how the heavens and earth
> Rose out of chaos.

To understand those lines an immense amount of relevant knowledge is required, but the one overarching conception which determines not only the meaning and function of that long sentence, but also just what knowledge *is* relevant to its understanding is the conception, *Paradise Lost.* No one, no matter how learned and sensitive to poetry, could possibly understand those lines if he did not rightly understand the kind of poem this is, by which I certainly do not mean "a Christian-humanist epic in blank verse" nor any other manageable compound name. To understand those lines it is necessary to grasp, in a way more specific than any label could be, the particular type of "Christian-humanist epic" this is. On the other hand, it would not be warranted to say that those lines could be understood only by someone who had read every word of *Paradise Lost.* It is possible for a reader to know precisely what kind of whole these lines introduce long before he comes to the last word of the last book. Furthermore, and this is the crucial point, it would be possible to understand those lines perfectly even if the thousands of verses which follow them were not precisely the verses that appear in Milton's second edition.

To take an example, Milton might not have included near the beginning of Book III the famous, beautiful lines on his blindness:

> Thus with the year
> Seasons return; but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
> But cloud instead and ever-during dark
> Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
> Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
> Presented with a universal blank
> Of Nature's works to me expunged and rased,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.

Can anyone doubt that the exclusion of these lines would impoverish the poem and, in ways both obvious and subtle, alter its meaning? Yet would their exclusion—and here I must rely on the reader's common sense rather than on any theory he holds about meaning—in any way hinder an accurate understanding of the first lines of the poem? Indeed, need we reach out for such an extreme example? Suppose in those first lines Milton had dictated "happy seat" instead of "blissful seat." A careful reader will recognize that this would subtly change the sense of that phrase, but would he hold that it changes the sense of the preceding phrases? Surely it does not. Of course, the substitution would alter the meaning of the sentence as a whole, but it would not alter the meaning of most components in the sentence nor would it change at all the type of sentence that it is. I am not suggesting that such relatively minor alterations can *always* be made without changing the intrinsic genre of an utterance, but I am insisting that this example illustrates the difference between an intrinsic genre and the particular meaning it governs.

What the example shows—and anyone can easily invent other examples for himself—is that we can understand the earlier parts of an utterance before we reach the end and, furthermore, that we can understand them in their *determinacy* as meanings functioning in a particular way. (Again, I must stress that determinacy does not necessarily mean either precision or clarity, but simply self-identity.) If that were not so, we could not rightly understand "Of man's first disobedience" until we had made sure that Milton had said "blissful seat" rather than "happy seat." Now the only way we can understand how an early part of an utterance functions in a whole before we have completed the whole is by means of a generic conception that is narrow enough to determine the meaning of the earlier part. This generic conception, while it may be very narrow indeed, has a degree of tolerance by virtue of which the later words of the utterance could be varied within limits without altering the determinate meanings of the earlier words.[4]

We can now define quite precisely what an intrinsic genre is. *It is that sense of the whole by means of which an interpreter can correctly understand any part in its determinacy.* Since the interpreter can do this before he knows the precise sequence of words in the utterance as a whole, and since more than

one sequence of words can fulfill his generic expectations without altering his understanding of the parts he has understood, it follows that this determining sense of the whole is not identical with the particular meaning of the utterance. That particular meaning arises when the generic expectations have been fulfilled in a particular way by a particular sequence of words.

Similarly, the intrinsic genre is as necessary to the speaker as it is to the interpreter. The speaker is able to begin expressing determinate meanings before he finishes his utterance because those meanings (carried by a particular sequence of words) are determined by the kind of meaning he is going to complete in words that have not yet been chosen. The speaker anticipates the kind of thing he will be saying, but his meaning in all its particularity depends on the particular choice of words by which he realizes that type of meaning. Once the speaker has willed "this particular type of meaning" the further determination of his meaning depends entirely upon his subsequent choice of words and patterns falling within the tolerance of the intrinsic genre.

If an intrinsic genre is capable of codetermining any partial meaning, there would seem to be left small *Spielraum* for that useful, catchall term, "the context." Ordinarily we cannot do without the term. If somebody asks, "How do you know the phrase means this rather than that?" we answer, "Because of the context," by which we normally mean a very complex and undifferentiated set of relevant factors, starting with the words that surround the crux and expanding to the entire physical, psychological, social, and historical milieu in which the utterance occurs. We mean the traditions and conventions that the speaker relies on, his attitudes, purposes, kind of vocabulary, relation to his audience, and we may mean a great many other things besides. Thus the word "context" embraces and unifies two quite different realms. It signifies, on the one hand, the givens that accompany the text's meaning and, on the other, the constructions that are part of the text's meaning. For example, the actual signs surrounding a crux constitute a given, but what those signs mean is a construction which we assume to be a given only because it seems less problematical than the crux. Similarly, the situation in which the utterance occurs is a given, whereas such matters as the speaker's attitudes are not given but are construed from the utterance itself. The conventions and traditions which the speaker relies on are not directly given by a milieu. We may know from the milieu what conventions are available to him, but the ones he chooses to rely on are construed by us from his utterance. Furthermore, such aspects of a context as purposes, conventions, and relationship to the audience are not outside the meaning of the utterance but constitutive of it. They are not only aspects which must be construed but also aspects which are intrinsic to meaning.

This is not at all to suggest that "context" is an illegitimate term that should be replaced. My purpose is to show that we use "context" to signify two necessary but distinct functions in interpretation. By "context" we mean a construed notion of the whole meaning narrow enough to determine the meaning of a part, and, at the same time, we use the word to signify those givens in the milieu which will help us to conceive the right notion of the whole. In certain situations certain types of meaning are very likely to occur. In addition to usage traits, therefore, we can have situation traits which help

us to guess what type of meaning we confront. But the givens of a situation do not directly determine verbal meanings. They help suggest a probable type of meaning, and it is this type idea which determines the partial meaning which we defend when we invoke the word "context." In other words, the essential component of a context is the intrinsic genre of the utterance. Everything else in the context serves merely as a clue to the intrinsic genre and has in itself no coercive power to codetermine partial meanings. Those external clues may be extremely important, but often (as in some anonymous texts) they are almost entirely absent. To know the intrinsic genre and the word sequence is to know almost everything. But the intrinsic genre is always construed, that is, guessed, and is never in any important sense given.

Since "intrinsic genre" has been defined and distinguished from "context," the preparatory work of this section will be complete when "extrinsic genre" has been defined. Now, an interpreter can use any type idea heuristically to get at the meanings of an utterance. Sometimes, in the course of interpretation, he will find that his original type idea must be discarded or drastically revised, but usually he does not find this necessary. Almost always, he begins with a type idea which is vaguer and broader than the intrinsic idea of the utterance and, in the course of interpretation, merely narrows this idea and makes it more explicit. A preliminary genre idea that is vague and broad is not, however, necessarily extrinsic, but rather, a heuristic tool that has not yet been sharpened to the fine edge necessary for determining all the meanings of the utterance. It would not necessarily be an extrinsic judgment to call *Paradise Lost* a "Christian-humanist epic" since the name serves merely as a preliminary heuristic tool that must be further sharpened before it can discriminate the functions of the partial meanings in their determinacy. A heuristic genre that merely has to be narrowed rather than revised cannot properly be called extrinsic. A genre may properly be called extrinsic only when it is wrongly conceived and used as an intrinsic genre. Thus, any final, generic sense of the whole different from the speaker's would be extrinsic because it would be used to codetermine meanings, of which some would necessarily be incorrect. Similarly, any heuristic type idea which an interpreter applied to a great many different utterances would be extrinsic if it were not narrowed in a different way for different utterances.[5] An extrinsic genre is a wrong guess, an intrinsic genre a correct one. One of the main tasks of interpretation can be summarized as the critical rejection of extrinsic genres in the search for the intrinsic genre of a text.

Genre Logic and the Problem of Implication

It is best to ignore for the moment a great many unresolved problems concerning genres in order to go straight to the crucial issue—the problem of implication. Of course, this problem is not in itself more important than a good many others in hermeneutic theory, but when our central concern is validity we always have to ask whether a particular meaning is or is not implied by an utterance. The correct determination of implications is a crucial element in the task of discriminating a valid from an invalid interpretation. Although disagreements between interpreters are sometimes total, as when one critic asserts that

a meaning is ironical and another critic denies it, more often their disagreements center on details of implication, which are, of course, no less important for being details, since the character of the details is codeterminate with the character of the whole. In fact, all interpretive disagreements when they are not merely verbal tend to be fundamental disagreements. At the center of them all is the question, Is this meaning implied or is it not?

In the second chapter I defined an implication as a trait of a type, and in this chapter I have given the name "intrinsic genre" to the type that determines the boundaries of an utterance as a whole. So we may now say that the implications of an utterance are determined by its intrinsic genre. The principle by which we can discover whether an implication belongs to a meaning turns out to be the concept of intrinsic genre. This general proposition now needs to be developed and illustrated.

This is not the place to discuss the connections between a general theory of verbal implication and the various accounts of implication that have been provided by logicians, though anyone familiar with writings on logic will notice affinities between what I have been saying about verbal implication and certain views of Mill, De Morgan, Bosanquet, and Husserl. Hermeneutic theory owes debts to so many fields that it is not surprising to find it indebted to logic, but verbal implication is at once broader and more limited than the kinds of implication discussed by most logicians, and hermeneutics need not pause very long over elaborate distinctions between varieties of implication, such as "syncategorematic" and "independent" implications or "strict" and "material" implications. Such distinctions are important with respect to a subject matter but rarely with respect to a meaning. For example, it is true that color necessarily implies extension (since it is impossible to perceive a color without perceiving also an area covered by the color), but oddly enough, I can name a color and can be so intent upon its particular quality as a color that I can almost if not totally disregard the idea of extension; certainly I can completely disregard any particular area covered by the color I name. Thus, to insist that color necessarily implies extension leaves out of account all those subtle problems of emphasis in verbal implication which I raised in discussing whether tree necessarily implies roots.

From the standpoint of verbal meaning, then, all implications without distinction are governed by the type-trait model. We know that a given partial meaning is implied by an utterance, because we know that such a meaning belongs in that type of utterance. With due qualifications, and in different terms, this is the point J. S. Mill made about the function of the syllogism.[6] We come to the conclusion that Socrates is mortal (that "Socrates" implies "mortality") because Socrates is an instance of a type (man) which past experience has shown to have the trait mortality. Whether the connection between a type and a trait is apodictically necessary or whether it is a habit or an accident or a brute given is, from the standpoint of interpretation, irrelevant. No matter how the connection between the type and the trait arose, all verbal implications are governed by some version of the formula "if the meaning is of *this* type, then it carries *this* implication."

I use the if-then convention of formal logic to point out two interesting

aspects of verbal implication as it relates to interpretation. The first is that the correct drawing of implications depends upon a correct guess about the type: "*if* the meaning is of this type," "*if* we have rightly grasped the intrinsic genre." On that "if" everything depends, and there can be no apodictic certainty that our notion is right. But the other half of the proposition also follows: "*then* the meaning carries this implication." From the premised type of meaning, the implication follows with necessity. There is thus a genuine logic of interpretation, which is what Schleiermacher meant when he said that we understand nothing that we do not understand as necessary.[7] The reason for this is simple: if an implication is a trait of a type, it is an aspect that partly defines the type, for if the trait were not there, the type would be a different type; to have the one is to have the other. The uncertainty of interpretation arises because we can never be absolutely certain that we have premised the right type.

The logic of implication is always, therefore, a genre logic, as common sense tells every interpreter. Whether an implication is present depends upon the kind of meaning that is being interpreted. That is why we confidently infer, when a small boy says, "I want to climb a tree," that he does not imply "roots," though he almost certainly does imply "branches." We feel certain of this implication because we are familiar with boys and with the type of activity involved in climbing a tree and, therefore, with the type of meaning uttered by the boy. *Qui non intelliget res non potest ex verbis sensum ellicere.*[8] But, of course, numerous types of meanings are not associated directly with a *res* like tree climbing, but rather with a shared fiction such as unicorn or Leda. Everyone knows that Leda will in most usages imply swan, because a verbal implication, whether or not it has a basis in "reality," always has a basis in a shared type. Unicorn is as much a shared type as tree climbing, and if the type were not shared by the interpreter, he could not draw implications.

These simple examples demonstrate that every shared type of meaning (every intrinsic genre) can be defined as a system of conventions. Something in us rebels, of course, when somebody insists that the meaning "I want to climb a tree" is *nothing but* a system of conventions. We may admit that the words and the syntax of the sentence are conventions, but we will insist that there is nothing merely conventional about tree climbing itself. The word "convention" suggests an arbitrary connection between sign systems and meanings, but there is nothing arbitrary about the implications of hands, and feet, and branches in climbing a tree. Indeed, it has even been argued that it is artificial to speak of conventions with respect to words and syntax, since within a given language group these elements have ceased to be arbitrary at all. But I think these verbal difficulties can be resolved precisely *because* nothing in speaking and interpreting is merely arbitrary, and everything depends on something learned. There is probably no better single word than "convention" to embrace the entire system of usage traits, rules, customs, formal necessities, and proprieties which constitute a type of verbal meaning. It is certainly true that some of these elements may be unalterable while others may be variable, but it is also true that the elements, whether necessary or not, must be shared. That was the point I made about the implication "Pythagorean theorem" in the term "right triangle." The implication is unalterably necessary, but it is not

a verbal implication except in certain genres of utterance in which the necessary connection is known and shared. Because the types must be shared in order to carry implications, and because they would not be shared if the interpreter did not know the type, it is genuinely descriptive to call an intrinsic genre a system of conventions.

This emphasis on the conventional character of all genre expectations and inferences leads back to Wittgenstein's metaphor of a game. If the drawing of implications did not vaguely correspond to the moves in a familiar game (the particular game is, of course, the intrinsic genre), then the interpreter would not know what moves to make. He could not know the rules. Yet "rules" is a strong, overly rigid word, as we know from the fact that slight alterations in the system of conventions are possible. A better word might be "proprieties." A genre is less like a game than like a code of social behavior, which provides rules of thumb such as, do not drink a toast to your hostess at a Scandinavian dinner party. That is not a strict rule (since under certain circumstances it would be permissible to drink the toast) but rather a propriety which is, on the whole, socially considerate to observe. The conventions of language are of this broadly social character, since language itself is broadly social and outreaches the rigid, artificially confined rules of a game.

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The Historicity of Genres

The intrinsic genre that compels the determination of one meaning instead of another does not always leap into the interpreter's mind but frequently emerges only after a narrowing process. The interpreter does not, of course, consciously follow a logical sequence: "this is a command, yet it is not a military command but a covert civilian command stated by my boss in the form of a polite request." The process of narrowing the genre begins at a far later stage if the interpreter is familiar with the genre and immediately recognizes some of its distinctive traits. That is why an experienced scholar is likely to understand an old text more quickly than a beginner, even when the beginner is quite familiar with the *langue* in which the text is written, but it is also why the beginner may on occasion arrive at an understanding that is truer than the practiced scholar's. The narrowing process of trial and error, guess and counterguess that the beginner must go through may in rare, lucky instances save him from an overly hasty typification. His expectations may be more flexible, and he may therefore perceive aspects that an expert could miss. But every expert was once a beginner; every speaker was once a child learning how to speak and interpret; and it is obvious that the heuristic use of genre concepts is central to this learning process.

My account of genres would therefore be very one-sided if I were to stress intrinsic genres at the expense of provisional, heuristic type concepts. Without these broader types new intrinsic genres could not come into existence. I have defined an intrinsic genre as a shared type that constitutes and determines meanings, since the implications of an utterance could not be conveyed if the genre were not a shared type. How, then, can anyone understand a new type

of utterance? How can an interpreter know which implications belong and which do not belong if he has never encountered that particular type of meaning before? If somebody has just left the army for his first job in civilian life, and his new boss writes him a note saying, "Can you conveniently go to New York on the 7:30 train?" what is he to make of this? It is obviously not the same kind of communication as "You will proceed to New York on the 7:30 train," which was what his previous boss would have written. To interpret properly this new kind of text our hypothetical tyro will have to make an imaginative leap and recognize that it belongs to the same broad type as "You will proceed to New York." If he were not capable of this imaginative leap, he could not understand the new utterance. It is clear, then, that broad, heuristic type concepts are just as essential as intrinsic genres. It is by means of them that new intrinsic genres are able to come into existence and are capable of being understood.

It is an interesting phenomenon that these broad type concepts are just as important to the author as they are to the interpreter. The point is not that the author cannot communicate a totally unfamiliar type of meaning, but the less obvious one that he cannot even formulate such a type. Pre-existing type conceptions are apparently as necessary to the imagination as they are to the exigencies of communication. This is one of the many penetrating observations that E. H. Gombrich makes in his book, *Art and Illusion.* He quotes approvingly Quintilian's remark, "Which craftsman has not made a vessel of a shape he has never seen?" and comments: "It is an important reminder, but it does not account for the fact that even the shape of the new vessel will somehow belong to the same family of forms as those the craftsman has seen."[9] This tendency of the mind to use old types as the foundation for new ones is, of course, even more pronounced when communication or representation is involved. Not every convention could be changed all at once, even if the craftsman were capable of such divine creativity, because then his creation would be totally incommunicable, radically ambiguous. The point is stated pithily by Gombrich: "Variants can be controlled and checked only against a set of invariants."[10] In the example above, the invariants included a number of identities between army and civilian conventions. In both cases a superior addressed a subordinate. In both cases the subordinate was asked to do something and could expect unpleasantness if he didn't. The variants were the two different conventions "You will" and "Can you conveniently," but so many other factors were the same that it required a very small leap of imagination to assimilate the one convention to the other.

In every new genre this process of assimilation is at work. No one would ever invent or understand a new type of meaning unless he were capable of perceiving analogies and making novel subsumptions under previously known types. Every creation of a new type involves the same leap of imagination that flashed in Picasso when he turned a toy car into the head of a baboon. To make such an analogy is not merely to equate two known types—baboon and car—but to create a new one—the car-baboon. It is, in other words, the process of metaphor. Literary critics have long told us that a metaphor is not reducible to its components and is something genuinely new. Every new verbal

type is in this sense a metaphor that required an imaginative leap. The growth of new genres is founded on this quantum principle that governs all learning and thinking: by an imaginative leap the unknown is assimilated to the known, and something genuinely new is realized. This can happen in two ways: two old types can be *amalgamated,* as in the car-baboon, or an existing type can be *extended,* as in the case of our demobbed tyro confronting a civilian command. Both processes depend on metaphor—that is, on the making of a new identification never conceived before.

To understand how this process of metaphorical assimilation produces something new we can consider the puzzle that confronts a speaker who has to respond verbally to a new type of situation that cannot be automatically subsumed under previous types of usage. He faces the same problem on a broader level that users of a language must solve when they have to name an object, like a railroad or a laser, that has just come into existence. One simple example that comes to mind is the question that arose with the invention of the telephone. What were the first users of the telephone to say when they picked up the receiver? A social anthropologist could amuse himself by drawing inferences from the various solutions to this problem that evolved in different countries. When the Americans say "hello" they mean, no doubt, essentially what the Italians mean when they say "pronto"—namely, that they have picked up the receiver and are ready to listen. But "hello," unlike "pronto," was a salutation, and to say "hello" in this new situation was to assimilate the telephone response to a salutation. Once that metaphorical leap had been made, however, the new usage ceased to be a salutation at all. A new genre had been created.

That was a simple example of forming a new genre by extending an existing one. Many new genres are formed by using both metaphorical extensions like "hello" and metaphorical amalgamations like the car-baboon. When an author evolves a new literary genre, for example, he usually employs both techniques. He not only extends existing conventions but combines old convention systems in a new way. The description of this process is the task of "influence" studies, and the danger inherent in such descriptions is that they tend to reduce the new genre to the preexisting conventions out of which it was formed. This is equivalent to identifying a metaphor with its elements instead of recognizing that every metaphor is a leap *ins Unbetretene.* In retrospect it is clear, for example, that Byron borrowed conventions from Pulci and Frere as well as from Homer and Virgil to compose *Don Juan.* When Byron said, "My poem's epic" he was relying on the reader's knowledge of traditional epic conventions, and he was also relying on traditional episodes as a schema for his own imagination. The storm at sea in *Don Juan* is there because sea storms belong in epics, and the Haidee episode is there because idyllic romances come after sea storms. Older genre conventions both guided Byron's invention and nourished it, but it is obvious that the genre idea of *Don Juan* is Byron's alone and is a new kind that had never existed before. One reason Byron felt obliged to lard the poem with so many explicit explanations of what he was up to was that his readers needed signposts which he did not have to provide in the somewhat more traditional genre of *Childe Harold.*

To describe the way new genres come into being is of considerable importance both to interpretation and to genre theory. Schleiermacher, with his customary penetration, long ago pointed out that an interpreter must take into consideration whether the genre is new or whether it is well developed, since in a new genre, repetitions and tautologies may not indicate emphasis but may simply arise from the author's attempt to secure a meaning that might otherwise be missed or wrongly understood.[11] Because essential elements of all genres are historical and culture-bound, it is not surprising that the best discussions of the genre concept are to be found not in Aristotle or his modern disciples but in those scholars who have tried to compose histories of traditional genres—scholars like Gunther Müller, Karl Viëtor, and Wolfgang Kayser, who have recognized the powerfully historical character of their subject matter. Even so, they too have sometimes fallen into Aristotelian hypostatizing in assuming that a traditional genre like the "ode" is somehow a species concept which defines the members subsumed under it. "How is it possible," asks Viëtor, "to write a genre history if one cannot first establish the norms that define the genre?" These norms are, he concludes, *das Gattungshafte* and consist in three things: "the particular stance, and the particular inner and outer forms. In their particular unity, these three make up 'the' genre."[12] In such statements Viëtor gives the impression that he believes in the definitive power of broad genre concepts. Gunther Müller, on the other hand, more accurately observed that "there is no such thing as 'the' genre, which necessitates and moulds, but only different *gattungshafte Strukturen* whose mutual relationships must be studied."[13] Yet Müller nevertheless rejects the nominalistic implications of this remark. Genre to him is something real, and it is to be found in history, even though what it is in a given case cannot be precisely defined.

These writers seem so close to a satisfactory solution of their problem that we could say they had solved it without knowing it. Müller in his comment on *gattungshafte Strukturen* came very close, and it was only his fascination with verbal difficulties that handicapped him: "The dilemma of all genre history is that we apparently cannot decide what belongs to a genre without knowing what is *gattungshaft,* and we cannot know what is *gattungshaft* without knowing that this or that belongs to a genre."[14] This is, of course, the hermeneutic circle again, but it is not directly relevant to defining the *Seinsweise* of a genre. At the level of history there is no real entity such as a genre if by that word we mean a type concept that can adequately define and subsume all the individuals that are called by the same generic name, such as ode, sonnet, command, prayer, or epic. Obviously such a broad type concept can validly represent some abstractedly identical traits among all the individuals it subsumes, but it is certainly not a species concept which sufficiently defines those individuals. That much Müller and Viëtor perceived. What they failed to state is that the reality of these larger genre concepts exists entirely in the function they actually served in history. *Don Juan* is an "epic" only because this word represents to us, as it did to Byron, *some* of the conventions under which he wrote. The term certainly does not define or subsume his poem.

But if that is so, why did Byron say, "My poem's epic"? Putting aside the

touch of irony in the statement (Byron really meant what he said), we find here the real mode of existence of the broader genre concepts. These concepts are broad type ideas that serve speakers in the way that pictorial schemata serve painters. Except in very traditional and formulaic utterances, they are metaphorical assimilations by which a speaker and his audience can orient themselves to something new. If traditional genres really were species concepts that constrained a speaker and an interpreter, then new types obviously could not arise. It is no more adequately descriptive to call a poem an epic than it is to call a play a tragicomedy. These words may often stand for convention systems within which texts were written, and the term "tragicomedy" may aptly describe the type idea under which certain dramatists actually wrote. However, the theorist, like the historian, has to distinguish between a type idea that genuinely subsumes a work and a type idea which is actually nothing but a provisional schema. Byron could reasonably call his work an epic since he really did use conventions common to other works identified by that name, but the interpreter or the historian has done very little when *he* calls *Don Juan* an epic. His use of such a term should be as metaphorical and provisional as it was for Byron. The larger genre concepts represent something real only to the extent that they represent norms and conventions that were actually brought into play. Used in this way, the terms are valid even if they are not adequately definitive.

If this view of the traditional genre concepts appears to be highly nominalistic, the reader has misunderstood the purpose of my analysis, which is not to throw aside the traditional concepts but, on the contrary, to show their validity. Some of the traditional types are guiding conceptions that have actually been used by writers and hence are not arbitrary classifications set up by the interpreter. To be able to speak or understand speech, a person must have recourse to a genre idea, and if the utterance is not a mere formula, he usually must have recourse to a genre that is broader than the intrinsic genre. The genre "command" names a type of use that a speaker has learned from previous uses, and he knows that what he says must have significant elements in common with those past uses. But since some of his usages may be new, the type idea he relies on subsumes the intrinsic genre only metaphorically. His command may be no more the same as other commands than a car is the same as a baboon. Thus, the larger genre "command" is at best a partial and provisional classification, though it is a necessary one. The real relationship of an intrinsic genre to broader genre ideas is a historical relationship.

The model for this relationship is not, however, a simple genealogical chart. The parents of the intrinsic genre are sometimes very numerous, and they may have widely different provenances. Furthermore, the description of these antecedents does not define the genre, any more than the description of its elements defines the meaning of a metaphor. The best way to define a genre—if one decides that he wants to—is to describe the common elements in a narrow group of texts which have direct historical relationships. Such descriptions can sometimes be very useful propaedeutic tools, but they become less useful to interpretation as their scope becomes broader and more abstract.[15]

The only broad genre concept, then, which is by nature illegitimate is the one which pretends to be a species concept that somehow defines and equates the members it subsumes. This is the great danger, for example, in Northrop Frye's classification of literary genres. Classifications are useful, sometimes indispensable conceptual tools in controlling a subject matter, and for purposes of classification it matters very little whether we use Roman numerals, the weeks of the year, or the phases of the moon. The one thing that does matter is the degree of reliance we place in the definitive character of these arbitrary schemata. If we believe they are constitutive rather than arbitrary and heuristic, then we have made a serious mistake and have also set up a barrier to valid interpretation.

Notes

1. Emil Staiger, *Die Kunst der Interpretation* (Zurich, 1955), pp. 15–16.

2. Charles Bally, *Linguistique générale et linguistique française* (2d ed., Bern, 1944), p. 37.

3. In the German hermeneutical tradition this is called *Vorverständnis.*

4. The term "words" is, however, merely a convenient approximation, since I by no means want to suggest that individual words are discrete, independent semantic units. The primary units of speaking and understanding are larger, sentence-like groupings of words. Cassirer, invoking the authority of von Humboldt, Wundt, and Dittrich, calls "the primacy of the sentence over the word" one of the "most secure findings" of linguistics (*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms:* Vol. 1, *Language,* trans. R. Manheim [New Haven, 1953], pp. 303–04).

5. Thus my objection to the dangerous practice of using abstract categories or monolithic "approaches" and "methods" to interpret a wide variety of texts. The use of such master keys to unlock large numbers of texts often has the effect of fitting the lock to the key rather than vice versa.

6. J. S. Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive* (London, 1843), bk. II, chs. 2–3.

7. Fr. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik,* ed. Heinz Kimmerle (Heidelberg, 1959), p. 31.

8. Luther's dictum.

9. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (New York, 1960), p. 25.

10. Ibid., p. 323.

11. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik,* p. 106.

12. Karl Viëtor, *Geist und Form* (Bern, 1952), pp. 305, 300.

13. Gunther Müller, "Bemerkungen zur Gattungspoetik," *Philosophischer Anzeiger, 3* (1928), 146.

14. Ibid., p. 136.

15. We need not, of course, evaluate genre descriptions or the criterion of their usefulness to interpretation; we might be interested in discovering recurrent patterns of mind, and so on. But these patterns can be discovered only *after* interpretation, since we need to be sure that the defining characteristics are really present in the texts. Because such conclusions about recurrent patterns are subsequent to interpretation, their heuristic and descriptive power is not primarily in interpretation itself, but in other domains such as psychology and anthropology. The patterns abstracted from interpreted texts cannot legitimately be reimposed upon the texts as a deeper and higher meaning. (I am thinking here particularly of Northrop Frye's influential system.) Such a

reimposed pattern could be nothing but a selective, abstract meaning whose importance belongs to some theory about man. To find the essence of a text by such procedures of abstraction is like finding the essence of a random set of objects (flag poles, billiard cues, pencils) in their being oblong. The distortion is complete when we choose one such *object*—say a phallus—as the primal ground or essence of the others.

3

Claudio Guillén

From Literature as System: Essays toward the Theory of Literary History

The concept of genre occupies a central position in the study of literary history, very probably, because it has succeeded so well and for so long in bridging the gap between critical theory and the practice of literary criticism. As every student of the subject knows, the theory of genres is coextensive with the history of poetics. Since Aristotle and Plato, it has normally subsumed philosophical inquiries which were vaster and more ambitious than itself. On the other hand, it has traditionally served as a practical instrument for poets as well as critics. While on a certain level the age-old debate on the nature of literary genres was following its course, the criteria under discussion were proving their fruitfulness on the level of individual criticism. If it appears to be a fact that speculative thinking—"theory" in the broader sense—has been particularly relevant in a practical way to, curiously enough, the creation and the reading of poetry, the question that naturally arises is whether there is much that one can learn from this important conjunction. The theorist asks himself, in other words, whether the critical effectiveness of the concept of genre should nourish his understanding of the original issues. If what we can observe is the persistently beneficial effects of a continuing problem, do the effects, then, shed any real light on the problem? Can the relationship be reversed, and the workings of criticism be made to have some sort of repercussion on theory? Is it possible to avoid concentrating on either speculation alone or a pragmatic escape from the issues?

Doubtless there is no forgetting the aesthetic and logical difficulties with which the subject is fraught, and which Benedetto Croce expressed most forcefully for his time. It is not sufficient to dispose of them by merely admiring the actual uses and the long-lasting pertinence of artistic genres—by pointing out, for example, that Croce himself wielded generic categories quite profitably in a number of his books. The challenging question is whether theorists should have learned from the fact that the notion of genre is so much more successful than other approaches—than the study of rhetorical figures or, I think, the analysis of style—in eliciting not just the singular quality but the *form* of a literary work.

Modern criticism has repeatedly demonstrated that the vocabulary of genre theory, paradoxically enough, adapts itself most sensitively to the apprehension of individual works. The instances that I have in mind are from the Hispanic field: Américo Castro on Cervantes, Amado Alonso on the historical novel, Stephen Gilman on *La Celestina.* There are, of course, many others. In the area of fiction alone, one need only recall Albert Thibaudet, Ramon Fernandez, György Lukács, Northrop Frye; the misreading of Balzac and Stendhal by nineteenth-century academic criticism precisely for lack of a theory of the novel; the value, too, of contemporary speculations on the essay or the prose poem; the reappraisal of theatrical conventions after Brecht and Beckett. Generally, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries constitute a second great period of creative reassessment in the history of European genre theory. The first of these periods was the Renaissance (and its aftermath the Baroque). Bernard Weinberg's admirable *History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (1961) has taught us among other things that a crucial relationship existed during the second half of the sixteenth century in Italy between the flowering of the theory of genres, in the tradition of Aristotle, and the practical criticism prompted by the extended quarrels over the *Divina Commedia* as epic poem, Speroni's *Canace e Macareo* as tragedy, Ariosto and Tasso and the new *romanzo* form, Guarini's *Pastor Fido* and both tragicomedy and the pastoral. The appearance of masterpieces like *Orlando Furioso* had provided the impetus for a restatement of theory.[1] Conversely, the field of poetics was regarded not as remotely abstract, but as directly relevant to the interpretation and the composition of single works. The controversies and the uneasiness concerning the new narrative procedures, with regard especially to Ariosto and the "romance," doubtless were a background condition for the invention of *Don Quixote,* even as the criticism of Guarini and the new tragicomedy would have an impact some years later on the quarrel over *Le Cid* and on neoclassical dramatic writing in France. Clearly, these junctures and events would prove to be highly influential. From Montaigne's trial of the essay to Cervantes' experimentations with the short story, the dramatic interlude, and the long narrative, it is difficult to underestimate the connection between the theoretical restlessness of the sixteenth century, in the area of poetics, and the ability to start anew, to confront boldly expanding circles of experience, on the part of the greater writers of the period.

The lesson that may be derived from the empirical relevance of artistic genres is perhaps the following: a genre is an invitation to form. Now, the concept of genre looks forward and backward at the same time. Backward, toward the literary works that already exist. Forward, in the direction of the apprentice, the future writer, the informed critic. A genre is a descriptive statement, but, rather often, a declaration of faith as well. Looking toward the future, then, the conception of a particular genre may not only incite or make possible the writing of a new work; it may provoke, later on, the critic's search for the total form of the same work. Clearly, what is at stake is the idea of form in the tradition of Aristotle's *Poetics*—the very context in which the European history of genre theory appears to make sense. On this occasion, I can only recall briefly that in the Aristotelian system form and matter are the two in-

trinsic "causes" that account for the mode of being of an object. As the object is analyzed after it has been made, an effort of abstraction is needed in order to distinguish between the two elements that have gone into its making: the matter of which the object was made; and the form, or principle of *informing* and structuring, which made it the actual object that it is. Craig LaDrière has made very clear that the student of literature ought to be able to distinguish between the form-matter issue and the form-content or form-expression dichotomies. If the matter of a work is confused with its "theme," "subject," or "content," then form becomes what remains after a work has been drained of its meaning.[2] Similarly, expression seems to imply that something was to be said before it was actually said. The impact and the expressiveness of a work of art are dependent on its form—in Mario Fubini's words, "quell'unica forma che in sé risolve gli infiniti contenuti."[3] What the "matter" of a literary work can be reasonably a part of, in LaDrière's sense, is language—language already shot through with formal elements, elaborated by the ages.[4] All previous forms, that is, become matter in the hands of the artist at work. If matter is what the poet informs, then prosody at that very instant is matter, meter is matter, and a motif or a plot is no more matter than is a design for composition or a principle of structure.

As I understand these issues (so elementary and yet so darkened with the patina of time), the crucial point for us is this: *form is the presence in a created, man-made object of a "cause."* It is the revelation or the sign of a dynamic relationship between the "finished" artifact and its origins to previous life and previous history. The genuinely great work of art vibrates and "moves" still from the artist's ability to proceed from one order of life to another by virtue of his modeling, reshaping, informing skills. Form is the visible manifestation later of this victorious process of formation, making, *poiēsis.*

The important corollary, as far as genres are concerned, is the fact that a preexistent form can never be simply "taken over" by the writer or transferred to a new work. The task of form-making must be undertaken all over again. The writer must begin once more to match matter to form, and to that end he can only find a very special sort of assistance in the fact that the fitting of matter to form has *already* taken place. To offer this assistance is the function of genre.

The idea of a genre like tragedy or the elegy has been most useful as a generalization when it has suggested to the writer what holds the different parts of an elegy or of a tragedy together: when the genre theorist, that is, has stepped away from the single work in order to discern or to recommend not a certain matter or a certain form but a principle for matching one to the other. Looking backward, a genre is a descriptive statement concerning a number of related works. Looking forward, it becomes above all—to revise slightly my earlier words—an invitation to the matching (dynamically speaking) of matter and form. During the Renaissance, this effect was well grasped by those theorists who did not submit to the common dichotomy (particularly in the tradition of Horace's *Ars poetica*) of *res* and *verba.* (For example: the definition of the elegy in terms of either meter or subject matter alone.) Some critics, faced with this division into surface structure and voluntary content, would then

recur to the services—i.e., to the unifying function—of genre. Such was the case with Giovanni Battista Pigna in his *Poetica Horatiana* (1561): "if materials, words, and verse are to be fitted together," Professor Weinberg explains, "some principle of fittingness must be established: this may be the vague notion of appropriateness . . . involved in appropriateness to genre. Pigna uses the latter principle."[5] A number of modern critics, it seems to me, do very much the same. Like Pigna, they have sought in genre a "principle of fittingness." They have observed that generic models, to a greater degree than rhetorical or stylistic norms, postulate and suggest that general informing drive which makes possible the emergence, beyond *res* and *verba,* of a unified artistic whole. The writer who in the process of writing a comedy, for example, discovers that neither a comic style nor a comic theme will be sufficient, can find in the structural model of the comic genre a much broader and more effective invitation to the matching of matter and form.

The validity of these criteria is confirmed by the fact that they allow us, in addition, to distinguish between the more characteristic or "central" genres and the classes or the statements that one usually regards as either peripheral or irrelevant. I am referring to three familiar kinds of definition. First, to briefly sketch the three, there is the examination of content alone (the "essence" of tragedy, or the "ideas" of the Russian novel) or of surface form (meter, for example). If the central thrust of generic definition is the association of matter with form, then statements such as these fall short of real genre. At best, they permit us to pose the question: What is the missing component?—the answer to which means a step in the direction of genre. Let us grant, for instance, that *terza rima* is not a genre. Why, then, is the poetic epistle a genre, with which this meter has often been linked? If the sonnet is a generic category too, what are the traditional goals that one should associate with its stanzaic scheme? The Gothic novel, in Austin Warren's opinion,[6] or the historical novel gradually became genres during the nineteenth century insofar as it was recognized that they demanded and continued to demand a special sort of informing effort from the narrative imagination. So much, then, for this first type of definition: like the thematic distinction between, say, a still life and a nude, it is merely irrelevant to the problem of genre. But the distinction between an oil painting and a fresco is, instead, peripheral; or perhaps introductory. It is characteristic of a second class, dealing with technique and craftsmanship. On this point it is difficult to disagree with Croce, whose idealism led him to deny any significance to material techniques. The Aristotelian response—basically, that we have "matter" as yet not formed—points to a similar conclusion. The differences that exist between the various artistic vehicles—between poetry read, recited, and staged, or between a gouache and a pastel—do not coincide with the overall structural models we call genres. The use of a technique or of a medium requires skill, know-how—but a "how" that does not as yet pertain to form. These are the premises of the informing effort, and the challenge that is implicit in them manifests full well that pure "matter" is to be found not only in personal experience or in society but in the conditions of a certain medium. Like the particular language a writer employs (for example, the arbitrary system of vocalic sounds that he must use), these condi-

tions are conventional. Thus one notices that the technical premise, or set of premises, of a form is often called a convention, a term which underlines the radical need for passage from the order of experience to the order of artistic form: in Harry Levin's words, "a convention may be tentatively described as a necessary difference between art and life."[7] One might say that conventions are an invitation, if not to a form, to a specific art.

The third class, even broader than the second, is composed of the essential modes often called "universals." The most widely accepted approach to these has been the tripartite division into "narrative" (or "epic"), "dramatic," and "lyrical." It is a paradox of literary study that despite the conspicuous growth of Orientalism since the early nineteenth century, and the persistent reliance of literary criticism on literary history, these Greco-Roman modes continue to be assigned some sort of "ultimate" value by numerous writers. Besides, the scholars who qualify these modes, or offer alternatives to them, are inclined to retain, nevertheless, a comparable vision of permanence—the same archetypal assumptions beyond history. Among critics writing in German, from Schiller to Emil Staiger, this has been particularly true; and in the case of Schiller, of course, highly fruitful. But there are three very elementary observations on this broad subject that one feels obliged to formulate. I do not doubt or deny, first, that the search for universals will be a central task for future literary studies, as it is for linguistics today. Second, this search will surely depend on the assimilation of a great deal of knowledge concerning the non-Western literatures, or to put it in academic terms, on the work of comparative literature scholars who have been trained as Orientalists. (I assume that we are not dealing with Kantian a priori assumptions but with the products of the critical observation of literary history. Even within the bounds of Western literature, the tripartite division into narrative, drama, and lyric has been insufficient for several centuries now. The rise of the essay as a genuine—certainly, since Montaigne, not spurious or marginal—literary genre has made the point quite clear.) Third, one must stress that these essential modes or universals do not coincide with the historically determined, practically oriented, form-conscious categories that we have been calling genres. The latter distinction was firmly made by Goethe in one of the prose commentaries to the *West-östlicher Divan,* in which the older poet was anxious to draw from his recent experience of Oriental poetry some understanding of what is and what is not permanent in literature. (The same relation between being and becoming, in a sense, that his admired Arabic and Persian poets knew so well.) Allegory, the ballad, the drama, the elegy, the epistle, the fable, the idyll, the ode, the novel, parody, the romance, satire, and several others, Goethe thought, are merely *Dichtarten*—poetic kinds, species, or modes. They compose a miscellaneous group, as some of them seem to be named after their content, others after external aspects, and only a few according to their "essential form" ("so findet man, dass sie bald nach äusseren Kennzeichen, bald nach dem Inhalt, wenige aber einer wesentlichen Form nach benams't sind").[8] These kinds or modes should not be confused with the three basic "natural forms," *Naturformen der Dichtung:* the epic (or narrative), the lyric, and the drama. The three natural forms can be, and usually are, blended within an individual work: for

example, in a French tragedy the exposition is narrative, the middle is dramatic, and the end may be called lyrical. Thus, it appears that in Goethe's thought the three ultimate archetypes were not only "natural" (as opposed to "conventional")—they were "inner forms" too, as opposed to externals. In fact, Goethe mentions in passing the mistaken taxonomy of the naturalist who collects only the external characteristics ("äussere Kennzeichen") of minerals and plants.[9] Moreover, his terms suggest that the evolution of poetry since the Greeks manifests the shifts and permutations of *Dichtarten* or genres and modes that are really "accidental." The genres, one might say, are contingent, because they are a function of historical change, and of the character and development of nations: only the archetypal inner forms are "necessary."[10]

The generic classifications of neoclassicism were, on the one hand, superficial and inconsistent; on the other, they showed no sense of history. Goethe's use, in the *Noten und Abhandlungen zum Divan,* of terms like "inner" or "essential" form[11] indicates that he had little patience with the first of these defects. As for the second, it seems at first glance that Goethe was applying a historical dimension or point of view to the synchrony of neoclassical genre theory. Stasis could not be accepted on any level by the author of "Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen." Nevertheless, history does not alter all forms—all "inner" forms—and there remains the distinction between the three universal archetypes and the different genres or modes. It is of course difficult to determine—not only in the case of Goethe—whether such a conclusion is the product of a general and unprejudiced review of historical data, or of a compromise between theory and history. But neither the literary critic nor the naturalist in Goethe could be expected to assume an all-out "evolutionist" position. Thus, the division into archetypes and genres appears to perpetuate the old Renaissance distinction between genus, species, and differentiae. The Renaissance theorist would normally call genus a fundamental form of "imitation," in Aristotle's sense, such as imitation by means of language, as distinct from a child's imitation of his mother or a painter's reproduction of what he sees, or also, within this form, from dramatic or narrative imitation.[12] At any rate, the Renaissance theorist would usually regard as a species what is today considered a genre—a species resulting from the introduction of certain particulars or differentiae into the genus. Classical logic assumed that genus was a class more extensive (though perhaps less "comprehensive") than species. Aristotle (in *Topica* 1. 5. 102a) had defined genre, "genos," as the essential attribute that is applicable to a plurality of things which are specifically different from one another.[13] Man was a species of the genus animal, the rose a species of the genus flower, and both could be identified through specific differentiae. In other words, the confusion of modern genre theory is partly due to the fact that what we now call genre was once considered more specific than generic, and that we are left without an accepted term for genus. In sixteenth-century Spain the Aristotelian theorist Alonso López Pinciano, author of *Filosofía antigua poética* (1596), called "especie" what the modern Spanish critic considers a "género"; and this distinction persisted for at least two centuries.[14] In eighteenth-century England, Hugh Blair or Dr. Johnson still used "species" as the ordinary term for "literary kind."[15]

In an article published more than thirty years ago, Karl Viëtor argued persuasively for the distinction between universals and genres. Goethe's *Naturformen* he called *Grundhaltungen*—fundamental attitudes. The narrative, the lyrical, the dramatic (*Epik, Lyrik, Dramatik*) are not artistic patterns or shapes or figurations, nor are they attitudes toward the artistic object or the public. They spring from the poet's elementary modes of experience, of action and reaction in the world.[16] To call the difference between these attitudes "psychological" would be too simple, for they involve a passage from ordinary experience to creative resolution, from the human being to the poet. One might say, negatively, that their status is not entirely aesthetic. On the other hand, the ode, the elegy, the sonnet are true genres: *Gattungen.* Viëtor, in a few masterful pages, explains that the characteristic feature of a genre can be found neither in the "outer form" alone, nor in the "inner form," nor in the traditional content. All three concur, in the *shaping,* for example, of a sonnet: the tension between its two physically asymmetric parts, the psychic compression and release, the dialectics of feeling and reflection all fulfill an indispensable function. But as some of these traits may be encountered also in an elegy by Schiller or a Hölderlin ode, it becomes necessary to detect a generic structure (*gattungshafte Struktur*) implying a principle of construction or organization of the different parts of the ode, the elegy, the sonnet. These are the structural norms which the poet employs and may also modify, since the nature of genres, unlike that of universals, is historical.

My concern here is not with universals and the many problems that they raise.[17] Our theme is genre, and I have made clear already that I welcome the distinction between universals and genres. There remains the question of the relationship between the two. When I pointed out a moment ago that what we call genre today was once considered more specific than generic, and that we are left without an accepted term for genus, I might have added that the situation was fortunate. For now the concept or the function of genre could be properly isolated and understood. As the link was finally broken between genus and species, it became possible to speak of genus in different ways (i.e., of universals, "ultimates," "types," *Naturformen, Grundhaltungen*) and of species as well (i.e., genres, or modes, or styles) without retaining the traditional assumption that the two need be logically and genealogically related.

Viëtor did not go so far. He took for granted that a genre like the ode, or the elegy, or the sonnet was a subgroup *of* the universal *Lyrik;* and that every genre had to spring, indeed could only spring, from one of the universal attitudes.[18] Likewise, in the fourth chapter of the *Anatomy of Criticism,* Northrop Frye assumes that the larger categories flow into the classes of genre and subgenre. Frye subdivides his four basic genres, which are "Epos," "Prose," "Drama," and "Lyric," into a number of "specific forms" (thus reverting to the older genus-species filiation). This is not the place to discuss the role these components play within Frye's system of relations and correlations. As far as genres are concerned, we need only extend Viëtor's own premises. Any "vertical" system (vertical as a genealogical tree is, with the branch of the elegy growing from a thicker lyrical branch and sharing a common trunk, etc.) fails to recognize the fact that universals and genres belong to different orders, and

can only be grasped by means of different criteria. Only the genre is a structural model, an invitation to the actual construction of the work of art. A lyrical attitude or assumption or style may be perceived on a certain level of a literary work, while on another level we may remark that it has been designed or organized in accordance with a particular generic model, and though these two strata may of course run together or overlap in a number of places, there is little that the critic can gain by postulating that some kind of causal link exists between the two.

The same point can be made by recalling the observation with which this essay began: that one notices in the patterns of genre, as used by practical critics, a special proximity to overall form. A genre, in this sense, is a problem-solving model on the level of form. A "radical of presentation" like, say, the narrative, is a challenge—but the kind of challenge that sets up a confrontation between the poet and the "matter" of his task. More problems are raised than solved by the writer's determination, vis-à-vis the blank page, to "tell a story." But let us suppose that he is facing a particular genre like the picaresque novel. Let us say—hastily—that the picaresque model can be described in the following way: it is the fictional confession of a liar. This is already a provocative notion. Besides, the writer knows that the picaresque tale begins not *in medias res* but with the narrator's birth, that it recounts in chronological order the orphaned hero's peregrinations from city to city, and that it usually ends—that is, it can end—with either the defeat or the conversion of the "inner" man who both narrates and experiences the events. What is at stake now, it seems to me—what is being constructively suggested—is not the presentation but the informing drive (in Viëtor's words, *Gestaltungsdrang*)[19] that makes the whole work possible. Within the process of writing, the "radicals" and the "universals" fulfill their function at a very early stage; details of rhetoric and style play essential but partial and variegated roles; and only the generic model is likely to be effective at the crucial moment of total configuration, construction, *com-position.*

Now, genres change, unlike "radicals" or "universals." As they change, they affect one another and the poetics, the system to which they belong, as well. Although genres are chiefly persistent models, because they have been tested and found satisfactory, it has been generally known since the Enlightenment—since Vico, since Voltaire's *Essai sur la poësie épique*—that they evolve, or fade, or are replaced. As a matter of fact, a few superior writers of the sixteenth century (Montaigne, the anonymous author of *Lazarillo de Tormes,* Cervantes) had stimulated the invention of the essay and the novel, the two genres which, together with the lyric, would dominate much of modern literature. Though not always as successfully, this trend would be continued, and would accelerate after the Romantic period. Thus, it seems important to reconsider the terms of generic theory from the point of view of *new* genres. Let us recall some of the criteria that have been used in this discussion: empirical relevance, form-making, invitation to the matching of matter and form, informing drive, problem-solving model, principle of construction, process of writing, moment of composition. As I review them, it seems evident that they imply two things: process and instrumentality.

Insofar as they do, I find myself in agreement with the main ideas of Mario Fubini in his well-known essay on "Genesi e storia dei generi letterari." There is much that the historian can learn, Fubini observes, from the arguments and the speculations touched off in the past by the introduction of new (i.e., not amenable to accepted genre theory) works. The main lesson is that all genres are potentially useful—and expendable. Let us admit, with Croce, that a genre is an external class in aesthetic terms. Let us also remember that—*felix culpa!*—the sixteenth-century debate on whether *Orlando Furioso* was a "poema epico" or a "poema romanzesco" demonstrated that although no single generic norm could possibly do justice to a masterpiece like Ariosto's, the combined use of several genres would allow the critics to surround and seize, so to speak, their quarry. Taken together, the different genres are like coordinates through which the individual poem can be apprehended and understood. (Fubini's own metaphor is of web and woof, *trama:* "così, protagonista del discorso, l'individuo poetico traspare attraverso la trama delle definizioni generiche, che valgono a farcelo meglio conoscere.")[20] Now, this sort of effect is obvious in the case of a much-discussed innovation like *Orlando Furioso.* But the same applies to traditional works. Generic statements, Fubini stresses, are instrumental—i.e., essentially critical. The process of classification that genre theory implies is but one part of a broader process of definition and interpretation. If the nexus between a genre and a single work is rather puzzling, we need not be reminded of the virtues, and even the necessity, of studious puzzlement. Genres, in other words, condition and incite the questioning of literary works. The dynamics of the history of genres shows that this basically fruitful questioning never ceases.

At the same time, we must avoid lingering too much over the point of view of the *critic.* Literary works have to exist, of course, before they can be questioned, and it is a mistake to assume that poetics is intended primarily for scholars and aestheticians. The traditional target of poetic theory has been the writer. For many centuries there were schools, in the broader meaning of the word, for the poet to join, where not only practical but theoretical teachings were shared. The young poet went to "school" insofar as he admitted, one might say, that to write was not to remain alone—that there were important principles and techniques he could not possibly discover within the brief span of his own life: *ars longa, vita brevis.* No poet is likely to raise his voice in an environment devoid of poetic models; and even today the formal model called genre exerts some normative impact—not in the old knuckle-rapping sense, but insofar as it offers a challenge, a foil, a series of guidelines. I realize, of course, that the poet, the critic, and the theorist converge to a number of situations, or even coincide. Fubini's emphasis on the critic's angle of vision may well have been justified by the fact that since Dante and Tasso, Manzoni and Carducci, the superior poet in Italy has often been a theorist-critic too. Yet it seems necessary to distinguish between functions, if not persons. When I began by recalling the critic's success in applying generic standards to individual works, it was in the hope that this a posteriori detection of structure would reflect or confirm the poet's original ability to shape and recreate through the intermediary of genre. If one tends to concentrate, as Fubini did, on the *critic's*

discovery of the instrumentality of genres, instead of the poet's, one is not in the best position to discern the chief merit of the generic model, which is, as I said earlier, its pertinence to total literary form-making.

The distinction between the functions of the poet, the critic, and the theorist, particularly with regard to new genres, becomes clearer in practice whenever we apply the three broad criteria—or angles of vision, or perspectives—which are most generally relevant to the subject. These criteria may be briefly described as follows. First, there is the temporal perspective. The idea of a genre must come into existence or be detected before it can be operative as a norm or as a practical model. It can be the result of an a posteriori contemplation of literary works—i.e., an afterthought, a product of the critic's attempt to classify and order his materials. Northrop Frye, to take a fairly recent example, has recommended that the name of "anatomy" be given to one of the basic forms of prose fiction, which offers, unlike the "novel" or the "romance," primarily intellectual patterns (as in Rabelais, or *Candide,* or the utopias). Historians of Spanish literature, who are familiar with the nineteenth-century genre called *costumbrismo* or sketch of manners (Mesonero Romanos, Estébanez Calderón, and others), have looked backwards and applied the term retroactively to the *Siglo de Oro* (Quevedo, Zabaleta, Francisco Santos). We may note in passing that the two terms overlap, to a certain extent, so that *costumbrismo* can be considered a version of the anatomy (and the dialogue in Hispanic prose between the novel and the anatomy perhaps comparable to the dialectics of the romance and the novel in American fiction). Now, the generic "process" involves not only the acceptance of new classifications and descriptions but possibly the passage, as a consequence, from criticism to poetry. The a posteriori class detected by the critic, and recognized by the theorist, may go on to have an impact on the writer's awareness of the potentialities of his medium, and thus become operative as a genre a priori. Where an academic term like "anatomy" is concerned, coming as it does centuries after Rabelais and even Robert Burton, this seems hardly likely, though not impossible. It is a matter, after all, of relative distance—between period and period, and between critic and poet. There are many situations in which this distance proves to be small: the rise of tragicomedy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, especially after the debate over Guarini's *Pastor Fido;* or, in our day, the influence on contemporary writers of terms and notions coined and used in quick succession by enterprising journalists, publishers, advertising men, and academic critics (such as the French *nouveau roman*). The process of generic description and classification is never quite closed, and the diachronic fluidity of genre theories is much more real than their apparent solidity at a single moment in history. Consequently, what our temporal perspective can most usefully discern is simply whether or not a generic model belongs to a particular synchronic system, that is to say, to the poetics of a particular literary period. Whether or how the term was integrated later into another synchronic system, is a different problem, requiring the use of different criteria.

We are thus led to ask, secondly, to what extent a class or a model is, so to speak, "official." The question is whether a new genre has entered the "inner circle" of the poetics of a period. After all, the very notion of a new genre is

ambiguous: if it is a genre, then it is relatively authoritative, and therefore not "new" in the sense of "unknown," "unfamiliar," or "untried." The so-called new genre comes into being through a peculiar process of acceptance, which is substantially different from that of the new poem or of the individual masterpiece. The poem achieves instant existence, as it were, merely by being read and "published." The generic process, of course, is rather slow (Montaigne the writer was recognized much before the essay form was, for example). But what is more significant is that although both the new work and the new genre imply a reading public, the emergence of the latter demands a special sort of critical approval: the readers, acting as critics or even theorists, decide that a viable model exists. This is the start of a process whereby the form gradually becomes "official." I am assuming that a difference exists between the status of the model at an earlier and a later stage of the process; or, in synchronic terms, that one ought to distinguish between the larger repertory of norms that is available to a certain generation and the codified, accepted classes composing what is usually considered the "poetics" of that generation. As far as synchrony is concerned, Renato Poggioli has proposed an important distinction between the explicit norms of a literary period and what he calls its "unwritten poetics." Before Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce could begin their more ambitious works, they had in mind a certain idea of the novel with which their practice could interact: "in other words, those writers worked within a vague, vast, and yet limited circle of literary possibilities: a circle constituting by itself a modern poetics of the novel."[21] Besides, Poggioli added, the need for such implicit standards is not a phenomenon limited to our time:

> Although this fact has escaped the conscious attention of most literary scholars, unwritten poetics have existed in every age, either alone, or alongside written ones, the last alternative being characteristic of neo-classical periods. In primitive ages, we have only unwritten poetics; in eclectic, composite, and decadent epochs, they predominate over the written ones; in classical or neo-classical periods they are less influential than the written ones, affecting preferably those special or minor currents which flow apart from the main stream.[22]

The sixteenth century, which I called earlier the first great period of creative reassessment in the history of European genre theory, cannot be regarded as a neoclassical period, in the context of Poggioli's terms. The new genres and the as-yet-uncodified examples of the Renaissance did not fail to affect the creative mainstream; neither was it an eclectic or a decadent epoch of the sort in which written poetics languish. It was a moment of dynamic contact between traditional artistic principle and practical innovation. The written and the unwritten poetics did not evolve on two separate, disconnected levels. Among the Italian theorists of the late sixteenth century, the main difference between an "Ancient" like Giason Denores and a "Modern" like Battista Guarini consisted in the fact that the former maintained the absolute validity of certain immutable principles, while the latter defended the multiplication of genres and the changes brought about by the demands of new audiences.[23] But both the ancients and the moderns were quite willing, under the cloak of either permanence or change, in theoretical terms, to make room practically in their

systems for the new genres, that is to say, to take over and legitimate some of the fields covered by the unwritten poetics of the time. Cervantes, who was familiar with some of the Italian theorists, confronted most lucidly the generic dynamics of his day, and the fruitful interaction that existed between the written and the unwritten codes. Though this is an instance that would require extended study and information, I refer to it in passing with the theoretical aims of this discussion primarily in mind. I do not know whether the pastoral novel was actually an "official" or an "unofficial" genre when *La Galatea* (1585) was begun, but I suspect that to leave the question open might be the closest to the truth, that is, to the situation in which Cervantes lived and worked. At the time of the debate over the *Pastor Fido,* which took place soon afterwards, it was argued that the long pastoral was a legitimate expansion of the eclogue. And the extensive narratives by Sannazaro and Montemayor were already well known and recognized. We may assume that the pastoral novel still belonged to the circle of "unwritten poetics" when Cervantes started *La Galatea;* that although the official class of the epic poem was available to every sixteenth-century poet, Cervantes chose not to compose an epic in *octavas reales* on the victory of Lepanto; that as far as the stage was concerned, he wavered between the accepted tragic structure and the developing popular forms; and that he confronted simultaneously the written and the unwritten norms of the day—the whole expanding circle of contemporary poetics—when he wrote his most syncretic and original work, *Don Quixote.* The modern novel, of course, from Cervantes to our time, could be described as an "outsider" model that writers insist on regarding as essentially incompatible with the passage from an unwritten poetics to an "official" system of genres.

Cervantes' response offers a singularly suggestive comment on the situation and the challenge every writer is obliged to face, namely, the necessity of an active dialogue with the generic models of his time and culture. This dialogue is active in the sense that the poet does not merely choose among the standards that are accessible to him—he makes possible their survival; and he determines *which* are the preferable or the pertinent or the potentially "new" norms. I have just recalled, under our first two perspectives, some of the ways in which readers or writers take part in a continuing process of classification and description, involving both a priori and a posteriori classes, or in which they decide the viability of new genres, whether "official" or not. In other words, I have been stressing the dependence of genres, and of their diachronic fluidity, on the *choices* that are constantly being made by poets, critics, and theorists. Under our third perspective, what one wishes to clarify is the *nature* of the choices that occur. For I am referring to a very broad spectrum of phenomena. In the case of the theorist (or of the writer functioning as theorist), at one end of the spectrum, one finds that the choice is usually logical, or allegedly so. At the other end of the spectrum, the decision of the poet will tend to be "existential." These are, I think, the truly fundamental differences. As far as the logical posture is concerned, I am aware of the fact that it subsumes a variety of procedures. The theorist may wish to define a series of norms or abstractions derived from a *reductio ad unum* of the instances at hand, either with inductive methods (analytical or historical) or with deductive ones

(based on philosophical or aesthetic principles). The norm may be an essential idea that the individual work can only reflect most imperfectly (in the Platonic tradition: "in a sense," writes Bernard Weinberg concerning such sixteenth-century "Ancients" as Giason Denores, "they see the forms as Forms, which are always the same, which make no concessions to times or audiences, which impose upon the poet a strict obedience to unalterable rules"),[24] or it may be a real entity which the work actually exemplifies (*universalia sunt realia*). The Horatian and Aristotelian theorists of the Renaissance did not limit themselves to any one of these alternatives. But what doubtless occurred in almost all cases was that genres were being *defined.*

The air of unreality one finds in the tradition of classical and neoclassical poetics has to be ascribed to this most widespread assumption, to wit, that genres are sharply delimited objects that are "out there," confronting the critic or the reader, requiring above all an effort of verbal definition. Nevertheless, aesthetic models were never "hard" data. As the readers, the poets, and some of the critics knew, and as the history of poetics manifests, generic norms have constantly demanded both a reaffirmation of their validity and a renewed perception of their nature (for a form can never be "taken over," as we observed earlier: it must be "achieved" all over again, from the start, with each single work). Logically speaking, it is a thankless task to define a being whose limits and character are largely dependent on the results of the definition. The modern novel highlights this circular quandary particularly well. But it is the problem of all genres, as theorists and historians have come to realize. Karl Viëtor, to recall an eminent example, stressed at the end of his well-known essay the crucial importance of this difficulty. How is it at all possible to write the history of a literary genre, he asked, when we do not possess firm generic norms in the first place, and must instead derive those norms from the survey of a multitude of single facts?[25] Viëtor went on to say that this is a problem all hermeneutics, all historical writing, have to face, as Schleiermacher well knew, and Dilthey, Simmel, or Huizinga (and, of course, Marxist dialecticians). In practice the historian does as well as he can, which sometimes is very well indeed. In order to write his *Geschichte der deutschen Ode* (1923), Viëtor himself relied on the ancient models, the progressive testing and retesting of initial standards, and the slow emergence of the history of the ode as a sequence and a species of growth (*Wachstumsvorgang*).[26] This is a problem, one might say, that no one resolves, that never disappears, but (in some cases) slowly, gradually dissolves.

So much for the theorist and the critic-as-theorist, who, under this particular perspective, find themselves a long distance away from the poet and the practical critic. (My concern, I repeat, is with functions, not personal idiosyncrasies.) The problem of definition is quite foreign to the preoccupations of the creative writer. The author of, say, a tragedy, is not necessarily concerned with the entire history of the genre or with the accuracy of his critical views. He looks forward to the interaction between a contemporary model—a "working hypothesis"—and his own poetic efforts and gifts. When a poet (or a reader, or a practical critic) observes the changing limits and elusive character

of a group of works in which he is actively interested, he does not stop to define—he *decides.* This is the crucial distinction that Robert C. Elliott has made quite clear in an important article, "The Definition of Satire," with reference to Wittgenstein's strictures concerning "concepts with blurred edges" and the definition of games:

> How does then one know whether *x* (which perhaps seems a borderline case) is a satire or not? Following Wittgenstein, one looks at a number of satires about which there is no question—which are at the center of the concept, so to speak—and then decides whether work *x* has resemblances enough to the undoubted examples of the type to be included in it. The point is: this is not a *factual* question to be settled by examining the work for the necessary and sufficient properties which would automatically entitle it to the name *satire;* it is a *decision* question: are the resemblances of this work to various kinds of satire sufficient so that we are warranted in including it in the category—or in extending the category to take it in?[27]

If a writer or a critic has decided that a group of works does exist, on the basis of certain significant resemblances, what matters then is the effectiveness of such a resolution, and the ways in which it helps him to understand and emulate those works. (There are a number of masterpieces one could regard as products of "incorrect" decisions.) This does not mean that the writer is obeying a sheer whim or a rootless impulse of the mind (as might perhaps be the case with the definition of games Wittgenstein discusses). We are speaking here of aesthetic responses (or, in a strict sense, of a position based on an aesthetic experience): for example, a response to satires as literary artifacts. These are decisions, then, *about* artistic form, and the writer who is making them is well on his way to his goal: the process of composition may have begun. The age-old interaction between poetics and poetry is not due merely to the opposition between model and creation, but to the conflict between the operations of two different approaches toward models, the logical and the existential-aesthetic. In the final analysis, these two approaches imply different kinds of subject-object relationships: the theorist naturally tends to move some steps away from, and to consider as an object, the form which for the poet is inseparable from the actual exercise of his skills.

Finally, I should like to stress that literary genres have always tended, in the European tradition, to constitute *systems.* I am speaking here, of course, as I have throughout this essay, of genres as formal models, as the core of the theoretical endeavor called poetics. ("After all," writes Renato Poggioli, "like its ancient counterpart, modern poetics is but a system of literary *genres.*")[28] This is made particularly clear by the authors of poetics in the Aristotelian tradition (from Francesco Robortello to Northrop Frye), and in terms of periods by the second half of the sixteenth century in Italy, which marked a high point in the history of systematic speculation concerning poetry. One may wish to recall, in this connection, such lesser-known accomplishments as Giovanni Antonio Viperano's subtle symmetries (in his edition of Cicero's *De optimo genere oratorum,* 1581), based on Averroës' differentiation between poetry

of praise and poetry of vituperation, or Francesco Patrizi's bold new poetics of the "marvelous" (*La deca istoriale,* 1586); or the celebrated efforts of Julius Caesar Scaliger in his *Poetices libri septem* (1561).[29] Scaliger, in the words of Bernard Weinberg, "is basically an orderly thinker, capable of seeing the necessary consequences of his distinctions and of creating a subordination of his ideas to guiding principles. One remarkable effect of this quality is that he recognizes, after developing his own system, that it is contradictory to that of Aristotle."[30] What matters most, as far as the structure of poetics is concerned, is not whether these writers accepted the precise terms of Aristotle or of Horace, but the fact that they all ordered their conclusions on the basis of certain guiding principles. In the manner of their humanist and medieval predecessors, the authors of Renaissance poetics seldom failed to indicate the place of their subject in the overall scheme of the arts and sciences. The order of poetics was expected to reflect, or be a part of, the great order of philosophy.[31]

Nevertheless, this is an order that was often forgotten or denied. Since the Romantic period and the breakdown of the neoclassical code, that is to say, since the apparent disintegration of a widely accepted body of theoretical assumptions concerning literature, critics and historians have been inclined to concentrate on the individual work, the single author, the isolated genre. If by "atomicism" one sometimes means the attempt to isolate the single parts of a system, to pry the element apart from the field or the mass to which it belongs, then the modern study of literature, in keeping with its Romantic origins, has been generally atomistic. Even the scholar who attempts to cover an entire historical period is not likely to rely too heavily on poetics as a unifying factor. Actually, the synchronic meanings of order—order as arrangement, classification, coordination—have normally been subordinated to the linear or diachronic meanings—chronological order, sequence of styles, evolution of forms, etc. The fact that so many genres have served, so to speak, as countergenres, and so many styles as counterstyles (praise and vituperation, tragedy and comedy, pastoral and picaresque, and so forth), is interpreted most often from a temporal point of view: for example, as parody, refutation, polemics, reversal. But the confrontation of genres may be due to a kind of coexistence on the level of experience or of the imagination, rather than to mere substitution or dialectical succession. The plays of Goldoni cannot be understood, Mario Fubini explains, solely within the history of comedy. The festive forms of writing, like laughter itself, appear rather often in the midst of seriousness.[32] Whether poetry itself—whether the totality of the significant works that come together in the poetic experience and the imagination of an epoch—provides the historian with a genuine order or a system, is surely a most difficult question to answer. Yet the shape of poetics need not provoke such doubts. The code, if not the message, is a coherent whole. One cannot but agree with Professor Fubini when he suggests some of the ways in which the itinerary of genres can be regarded not as the evolution of independent norms, nor as the survival of timeless "structures," but as the history of changing theoretical systems.

Notes

1. Cf. Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1961), ii, 812.

2. Cf. J. Craig LaDrière, "Form," in *Dictionary of World Literature,* ed. Joseph T. Shipley, 2d ed. (New York, 1953), p. 168.

3. "Genesi e storia dei generi letterari," in *Tecnica e teoria letterari,* vol. ii of *Problemi ed orientamenti critici di lingua e di letteratura italiana,* ed. A. Momigliano et al. (Milan, 1951), p. 32; reprinted in Mario Fubini, *Critica e poesia* (Bari, 1966), p. 135. Further citations will be from *Critica e poesia.*

4. Cf. LaDrière, "Form," p. 168.

5. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism,* i, 158.

6. Cf. René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York, 1949), p. 243.

7. *The Gates of Horn* (New York, 1963), p. 18.

8. "Noten und Abhandlungen zu besserem Verständnis des Westöstlichen Divans," in *Goethes Werke* (Weimar, 1888), vii, 117.

9. Ibid., vii, 120.

10. Cf. *loc. cit.*

11. On Goethe's use of "inner form" (derived from Shaftesbury), *cf.* René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950* (New Haven, 1955), i, 203. On Goethe's idea concerning the natural forms of poetry, Professor Wellek remarks (p. 213): "the principle implied is obviously that of Goethe's own metamorphosis of the plants: the view that there is an *Urpflanze,* of which all the other plants are merely variations. There was also an *Urpoesie,* out of which the three genres grew by separation."

12. Cf., for example, Alonso López Pinciano, *Filosophía antigua poética,* ed. Alfredo Carballo Picazo (Madrid, 1953), i, 242.

13. Cf. José Ferrater Mora, "Género," in his *Diccionario de Filosofía,* 4th ed. (Buenos Aires, 1958), p. 581.

14. Cf. Pinciano, *Filosophía antigua poética,* p. 240.

15. Cf. Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature,* p. 338, n. 8.

16. Cf. Karl Viëtor, "Probleme der literarischen Gattungsgeschichte," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Geistesgeschichte und Literaturwissenschaft,* ix (1931), 425–427; reprinted in Viëtor, *Geist und Form* (Bern, 1952), under the title "Die Geschichte literarischer Gattungen." Further citations will be from *Geist und Form.*

17. If universals are experiential or psychological, is it not misleading, willfully so, to continue to use poetic-generic terms like "narrative," "dramatic," "lyrical"? A convenient concept and term is Northrop Frye's "radical of presentation," cf. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 246–247.

18. Cf. Viëtor, *Geist und Form,* p. 294.

19. Cf. *Geist und Form,* p. 294.

20. *Critica e poesia,* p. 129.

21. Renato Poggioli, "Poetics and Metrics," in *Comparative Literature. Proceedings of the IInd Congress of the I.C.L.A.,* ed. Werner P. Friederich (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1959), i, 194; reprinted in Poggioli, *The Spirit of the Letter* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 343–354.

22. Ibid., p. 195.

23. Cf. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism,* ii, 1074–1105.

24. Ibid., ii, 1104.

25. Cf. *Geist und Form,* p. 305.

26. Cf. *Geist und Form,* p. 308.

27. Robert C. Elliott, "The Definition of Satire," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature,* xi (1962), 23.

28. "Poetics and Metrics," p. 194.

29. Cf. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism,* i, 209; ii, 743–750, 765–786.

30. Ibid., ii, 744.

31. Cf. ibid., i, ch. 1.

32. Cf. *Critica e poesia,* p. 149.

4

Jonathan Culler

Toward a Theory of Non-Genre Literature

There is no question . . . of establishing a theory, a pre-existing mold into which to pour the books of the future. Each novelist, each novel must invent its own form. No recipe can replace this continual reflection.

Alain Robbe-Grillet, *For A New Novel*

If a computer were programed to print random sequences of English sentences, a study of the texts thus produced would be very instructive. As one asked, repeatedly, "How can I make sense of this text?" one would become aware of the particular appropriateness of this question, for reading under these conditions is a process of making or producing sense by applying to the text a variety of hypotheses, contexts, and codes. Whether or not a text makes sense depends on the possibility of reading it as an instance of one of the types of intelligibility one has learned to look for. "Sense" is not a unitary category: what makes sense as a haiku would not make sense as instructions for a cake-mix. Hence, reading these computer texts would be a process of trial and error, of postulating various functions to see what will suffice.

Some of the most important expectations and requirements for intelligibility are enshrined in the various genres. A genre, one might say, is a set of expectations, a set of instructions about the type of coherence one is to look for and the ways in which sequences are to be read. This definition is quite simply illustrated if one takes a piece of journalistic prose and sets it down on a page as a lyric poem.

Yesterday on Route Seven
A car
Traveling at sixty miles per hour rammed
a sycamore
Its four occupants were
Killed.

The *fait divers* has become exemplary tragedy. "Yesterday" takes on a completely different force. Referring now to the set of possible yesterdays, it suggests a frequent, almost random event. One is likely to give new weight to the wilfulness of "rammed"—the car is the only active, animate force—and to the

passivity of "its occupants," defined in relation to their automobile. The lack of detail and explanation connotes a certain absurdity, and the neutral, reportorial style will be read as restraint and resignation. This is clearly different from the way in which one interprets journalistic prose, and these differences can be explained only by reference to a set of expectations with which one approaches lyric poetry: that it is atemporal (hence the new force of "yesterday"), that it should cohere at a symbolic level (hence the re-interpretation of "rammed" and "its occupants"), that it is complete in itself (hence the significance of the absence of explanation), that it expresses an attitude (hence the interest in tone as deliberate posture). Our set of expectations about lyric poetry—our notion of lyric poetry as a genre—leads us to look for these particular types of intelligibility.

There is, of course, an alternative view of genres: that they are simply taxonomic categories in which we place works that share certain features. Since every work has properties, every work, perforce, could be placed in some genre. If a text seems not to fit, this means only that a new category must be postulated. Thus, *non-genre literature* would be an inadmissible concept, or if it were to be admitted, would designate only a residue.

This view of genres seems singularly unhelpful. To treat them as taxonomic classes is to obscure their function as norms in the process of reading. If we begin with the assumption that every work must be accounted for in a literary taxonomy, then our taxonomic classes become artifices of description. But taxonomies must be motivated, and if one literary classification is better than another it is because its genres are, in some sense, natural classes whose reality is grounded in the expectations and procedures of readers. Moreover—and this is particularly crucial for the study of contemporary literature—this approach would make it difficult to account for the importance of those seminal and disquieting works which, falling outside of established genres, would be treated as a residue. As Philippe Sollers, one of the leading theorists and practitioners of this "residual" literature, writes:

> Perhaps the most striking feature of modern literature is the appearance of a new monolithic, comprehensive mode of writing, in which the distinctions among genres, which have been completely abandoned, give way to what are admittedly "books," but books for which, we might say, no method of reading has yet been worked out.

What one requires is a theory which distinguishes between the *readable* and the *unreadable* and assigns an important place to, and explains the significance of, these works which resist our reading: works like Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror,* Mallarmé's "Un coup de dés," Joyce's *Finnegans Wake,* Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus* and *Impressions d'Afrique,* Robbe-Grillet's *Instantanées,* Sollers' *Drame* and *Nombres.* This theory, which after Julia Kristeva one might call *théorie du texte,* grows out of what is most radical and interesting in contemporary French literary theory and practice. But I say "grows out of" advisedly, for the members of the *Tel Quel Group*[1] might not care to recognize themselves in the apolitical reflections that follow.

A theory is defined by the questions it asks, and the question that founds

this theory is, "Why are our most crucial and tantalizing experiences of literature located at the interstices of genres, in this region of *non-genre literature?*" The answer might be found in Wallace Stevens:

> The poem must resist the intelligence
> Almost successfully.

The essence of literature is not representation, not a communicative transparency, but an opacity, a resistance to recuperation which exercises sensibility and intelligence. Just as we would stop playing games if we could master them completely, so our interest in literature depends on what Geoffrey Hartman calls "the differential relation of form to consciousness," the tension between writing and reading. The concept of *text* has been developed to focus attention on literature as a surface. Jacques Derrida has brilliantly exposed what he calls the phonocentrism of Western culture—the assumption that the written word is simply a record of the spoken word and hence represents a communicative intention. But we know, at least since Mallarmé, that this "*métaphysique de la présence*" is ill-suited to literature, which inevitably involves an absence, whether that of emotion recollected in tranquillity and evoked by the poem as an absence, or that of *"l'idée même et suave, l'* absente *de tous bouquets."* Spoken language might refer us to a communicative presence, but written language involves an irreducible *différance* (spelled with an "a" to highlight a difference perceptible only within the written language and to emphasize the pun: difference, deferment). The written word is an object in its own right; it is different from meanings which it defers and which cannot be grasped except by other signs that we place in the "empty" space of the *signified.* The text is a region in which characters are placed in relation to one another and inaugurate "a play of meaning." The job of literary theory is to specify the forms of this game: the procedures used to defer meaning, and the procedures of recuperation.

One might say that the attitude which determines contemporary literature is a fascination with the power of words to create thought. When linguists present us with examples of unacceptable sentences, the immediate reaction of the literary sensibility is to imagine contexts in which these could have a meaning. Those who note this astounding recuperative ability of the mind are likely to ask what, if any, are its limits. The writer, thus, hovers on the edge of highly patterned gibberish, trying to determine exactly where that border lies. Robbe-Grillet has admitted in an interview: "I grant you that *Dans le labyrinthe* can, in fact, be recuperated. If I thought that it could not, I would not continue to write. I would have attained my goal." And of course he is right: although the philosophical acrobatics of recuperation—the *chosistes* versus the subjectivists—are highly amusing, his novels are recuperable.

For more successful examples of resistance one must look elsewhere, for if the essential function of a genre is maintained, radical changes of convention can take place within it without its texts becoming *unreadable.* One has only to think of the varieties of realism that give the novel a history. The novel itself is not called into question by a change from social to psychological realism. As long as one can take the text as about someone and his experience of the

world, one can accept the most bizarre alterations of technique. Thus the move from *Portrait of the Artist* to *Ulysses* is easily assimilated, but the shift from *Ulysses* to *Finnegans Wake* takes us outside the genre. *Finnegans Wake* is probably not recuperable—or only for some future audience who might read it as a realism of the process of writing. It cannot be read as a novel but must be read at a metaliterary level: the level at which the acts of reading and writing are posed as problematic.

There are, of course, an increasing number of works which must be read at this level. As Sollers writes, "Today the essential problems are not those of author and work, but those of *writing* and *reading* [*écriture/lecture*]." *Non-genre literature* avoids established relations between *écriture*—production of a surface—and *lecture*—production of sense—and hence, for the reader, is essentially *about* the ways in which he attempts to create order.

Ecriture uses a variety of procedures, some of which are mechanical or aleatory. Today we find, writes Julia Kristeva, "literature has reached that maturity in which it can write itself like an automaton and no longer simply 'represent' like a mirror." One might cite the procedures developed by Pataphysicians for altering, rewriting, texts; the mechanical process of description in Claude Ollier's "Panoramic description of a modern neighborhood"; or the procedures that structure Sollers' *Nombres,* altering personal pronouns, ordering words according to a sequence of vowels, fragmenting the discourse—all in ways that suggest an original text and force the reader to grope toward it but finally frustrate his efforts. As Julia Kristeva explains:

> It is because the condensed sequences of *Nombres* do not represent anything to the listener trying to grasp a communicated meaning, because it is impossible to retain the information they proffer, that they awaken the infinite memory of a whole repertory of meaning.

The recourse to mechanical procedures plays two roles: it creates pattern but prevents this pattern from manifesting, directly, a human intentionality. The machine produces a structure but significance is the product of the reader.

Games are another important technique. The writer sets himself the problem of organizing a group of elements selected in some random or irrelevant way. There is, for example, the surrealist game, *l'un dans l'autre,* in which two objects are chosen independently and one must then be described in terms of the other: describe a sewing machine as if it were a sugar cube. This game derives, of course, from the theory that the force and interest of a metaphor is proportional to the distance that separates its two terms. The goal is to investigate whether any materials are so refractory as to resist intelligibility; the result is an explicit exercise of the power of language to create thought.

More interesting and radical are the games developed by Raymond Roussel. Take a sentence, for example, *la peau verdâtre de la prune un peu mûre,* and change one letter to produce *la peau verdâtre de la* brune *un peu mûre.* Then invent incidents to get you, as it were, from "p" to "b." Or alternatively, take a line of verse, title of a book, etc., and read it as a series of puns: *Napoléon premier est empereur* yields *Nappe olé ombre miettes hampre air heure,* providing elements which must be organized in some way.[2] *Locus Solus,* that enigmatic

monument, is really the ultimate game of this sort. It is the story of machines invented to create a world which is itself created by these mechanical linguistic procedures. Thus, the machine that picks up teeth and deposits them in a mosaic is itself produced by punning on *demoiselle à prétendants* to give *demoiselle* (in the sense of "paviour's rammer" or "paving beetle") *à reître en dents.* The work is, of course, really nothing more than a fantastic exercise in the response of imagination to language. As one of Roussel's admirers declares, "Roussel has nothing to say, and he said it badly."[3] We cannot, then, read *Locus Solus* as a novel; it is rather a *text* in a language which sends us nowhere: "a language which says only itself," as Michel Foucault points out in his study of Roussel, and which mocks us in our attempts at recuperation. Only a theory of *non-genre literature* could explain the curious fact that we take such works to be significant.

Another mocking voice is that of Lautréamont. His procedures belong to a slightly different category, although kinship with Roussel becomes apparent at a theoretical level. In Roussel, one might say, language is finally closed, incestuous, self-referential. In Lautréamont the same end is reached but by a different route. By overstating his claims about the way his language impinges upon and affects the world, Lautréamont provokes in the reader a counter-reaction which leads him to emphasize the *clôture* and artificiality of this sequence of marks on the page. The opening line of *Maldoror,* the wish that the reader may become "as ferocious as what he is reading," forces the reader to grapple, whether ferociously or not, with an egregious category mistake, and problems are only compounded when he reads, "I shall establish in a few lines how Maldoror was good during his early years, when he lived happily. There, that's done." An unaccustomed shock for the reader of novels. In a sense, of course, the narrator is right. By telling us he will establish a particular fact he does establish it. But if we grant him this right, we must agree to read his verbs as performatives, accomplishing textual actions rather than reporting others, and we must abandon all hope of distinguishing between the "I" and "he." In short, we must read the book as an act of what Roland Barthes calls "the consciousness of the unreality of language" and violate the implicit contract between author and reader that forms the basis of the novel as a genre.

Of course we do continue to read Lautréamont, despite these problems. And that is perhaps what is most fascinating: the astonishing human capacity to recuperate the deviant, to invent new conventions and functions so as to overcome that which resists our efforts. These texts which fall at the interstices of genres enable us to read ourselves in the limits of our understanding. "We are nothing more than this movement, nocturnal and diurnal, of the readable and the unreadable, in us, outside of us," says Philippe Sollers. Our most profound experiences may be those of frustration. That is why it would be interesting to study the random texts produced by a computer and why *non-genre literature* is not just a residue but central to the contemporary experience of literature.

Many of the most interesting French writers, including those who, like Butor and Robbe-Grillet, previously wrote "novels," seem recently to have joined Sollers and the *Tel Quel Group* in the production of texts destined to

bear out Maurice Blanchot's predictions about *Le Livre à Venir* and to show the justice of his observation that "when one encounters a novel written according to all the rules of the past historic tense and third person narration, one has not, of course, encountered 'literature.'"[4]

Notes

1. *Tel Quel* is the leading avant-garde review in Paris today. Those who publish in that review are known as the *Tel Quel Group;* their work, both from a theoretical and practical point of view, is extremely disruptive in relation to traditional thought and literature. Ed.

2. An attempt to render the first example in English would give: "The wrinkled skin of the old *p*ear" and "The wrinkled skin of the old *b*ear." The reader can work out the second example. Ed.

3. Rayner Heppenstall, *Raymond Roussel* (London, 1966), p. 87.

4. Maurice Blanchot, *Le Livre à Venir* (Paris, 1959), p. 254.

5

Marthe Robert

From Origins of the Novel

A novel is a life in the form of a book. Every life has an epigraph, a title, a publisher, a foreword, a preface, a text, foot-notes, etc. . . . It has them or may have them.

Novalis

The modern novel, whether it was born with Don Quixote's memorable escapade or on Robinson Crusoe's desert Isle,[1] and notwithstanding the distinguished and historically acknowledged ancestry it claims, is a newcomer to the literary scene, a commoner made good who will always stand out as something of an upstart, even a bit of a swindler, among the established genres it is gradually supplanting. From as early as the sixteenth century the genre has doubtless included a great many famous names (especially if Rabelais is seen as a novelist), and Cervantes finally confirmed its status at the start of the seventeenth century when, creating the Book of books, the prophetic Bible which put an end to the Golden Age of Belles Lettres, he inaugurated the uneasy era of Modernity. Nonetheless in 1719—a date usually accepted as its official birthday—it was still held in such disrepute that Daniel Defoe, its presumed begetter, took great pains to ensure that his masterpiece would not be assimilated to this much-despised byproduct of literature. According to him *Robinson Crusoe* is a true story[2] whereas the novel is a lie, insipid and sentimental by nature and created to corrupt men's hearts and their tastes. Moreover such an unfavorable assessment was no exception. Indeed, during the previous century people had to read the books they most enjoyed—which were precisely those they publicly condemned—in secret. And such was still the attitude of Diderot, another shamefaced novelist, if we are to judge from his dismissal in *Jacques le Fataliste* of the arbitrariness and conventionality of fictional narrative's customary methods. In fact he was so prejudiced against the novel that, when writing his *Eloge à Richardson,* divided as he was between his admiration for this novelist and his scorn for the genre, he claimed that Richardson's works should be classed in some other category than that of the novel, which was wholly unworthy of them. True, the scorn of the intelligentsia did not hinder the novel's progress: by the middle of the century neither readers nor writers of novels had any further cause to blush at their predilection. And a century later Balzac could assert without fear of ridicule that he was "history's secretary" and claim that *la Comédie humaine* was no less important than Napoleon's heroic exploits.

In fact the novel achieved its devastating success as an upstart. All things

considered, its victories were mainly due to its encroachments on the neighboring territories it surreptitiously infiltrated, gradually colonizing almost all of literature. Graduating from a discredited sub-category to an almost unprecedented Power, it now reigns more or less supreme over the world of literature which it influences aesthetically and which has become economically dependent on its welfare. With the freedom of a conqueror who knows no law other than that of his unlimited expansion, the novel has abolished every literary caste and traditional form and appropriates all modes of expression, exploiting unchallenged whichever method it chooses. And while it squanders an age-old literary heritage it is simultaneously intent on monopolizing ever wider provinces of human experience, of which it frequently claims an intimate knowledge and either presents them to the reader straight, or else interprets them ethically, historically, theologically or even philosophically and scientifically. Similar in many respects to the imperialistic society from which it sprang (its adventurousness inevitably recalls Robinson Crusoe, whose colonization of a desert island was surely not fortuitous), it is irresistibly drawn toward the universal and the absolute, toward generalizations of events and ideas. Thus it inevitably standardizes and levels down literature while simultaneously providing it with unfailing outlets, since it can write about everything under the sun. Revolutionary and middle-class, democratic by choice but with a marked tendency for totalitarian over-rulings of obstacles and frontiers, the novel is free, free to the point of arbitrariness or total anarchy. Yet paradoxically its uncontested freedom is strangely parasitic; for the novel is naturally compelled to subsist both on the written word and on the material world whose reality it purports to "reproduce." However its twofold parasitism, far from restricting its activity, seems only to increase its energy and extend its frontiers.

Obviously the novel owes its historical success to the enormous privileges literature and the material world have granted with equal generosity. The novel can do what it wants with literature; it can exploit to its own ends description, narrative, drama, the essay, commentary, monologue and conversation; it can be, either in turn or at once, fable, history, parable, romance, chronicle, story and epic. There are no proscriptions or restrictions to limit its choice of subject matter, setting, time or space. The only prohibition it generally observes, because it defines its "prosaic" nature, is not even compulsory for it can include poetry at will or simply be "poetical." As to the material world to which it is more intimately related than any other form of art, the novel is free to represent it faithfully, to distort it, to preserve or modify its proportions and colors, to judge it and even to speak in its name and claim to transform existence by recreating it in a fictitious world. If it so wishes it can feel responsible for its assessments and descriptions, but this too is entirely optional: neither literature nor the world will ever take it to task for the way it exploits their property.

Unlike traditional forms whose excessive regularity is not only subjected to prescriptions and proscriptions but is actually created by them, the novel knows neither rule nor restraint. Open to every possibility, its boundaries fluctuate in all directions. This is doubtless the main cause for its increasing

popularity as well as for its appeal to modern societies whose inventiveness, restlessness and vitality it mirrors. Yet theoretically such quasi-unlimited potentialities entail a fatal indeterminacy. Indeed, if the genre is undefined and virtually undefinable, can it constitute a form recognizable as such? Should we not rather consider each work as an isolated case to be appreciated on its own terms according to the descriptive criteria it suggests? In other words, can a theory of the novel, based on a few indispensable, adequate and relatively stable principles, be formulated which would make it possible first to classify such works rationally, and then to analyze them from a standpoint that would be as free as possible from pre-conceptions? Such a question, though mainly ignored by our own literary historians,[3] is given considerable prominence by their German and Anglo-Saxon colleagues in what they rather emphatically and optimistically call the "science of literature." However, its implications are practical rather than speculative, for until it has been answered the various schools of thought cannot be reconciled, and misunderstandings will continue to proliferate between the novelist and part of the reading public, and especially between the novelist and the critic. Indeed critics seem to take the novel form for granted. At least such are the implications when they assert that a certain book is a novel and that another is not and should be classed in a different category. Such an assessment is only acceptable if it is based on a general principle which takes simultaneously into account the infinite peculiarities of works of this kind, that is to say the freedom they enjoy and the definite requirements dictated by their common form. Otherwise the novelist has every right to challenge it with Maupassant's irrefutable argument to a reviewer who praised *Pierre et Jean* while denying it the status of novel:

> After *Manon Lescaut, Don Quixote, les Liaisons dangereuses, Werther, les Affinités électives, Clarissa, Emile, Candide, Cinq-Mars, René, les Trois Mousquetaires, Mauprat, le Père Goriot, la Cousine Bette, Colomba, le Rouge et le Noir, Mademoiselle de Maupin, Notre-Dame de Paris, Salammbô, Madame Bovary, Adolphe, Monsieur de Camors, l'Assommoir, Sapho,* etc., a critic who can still write "This is or is not a novel" seems to me to be more incompetent than discerning. . . . If *Don Quixote* is a novel is *le Rouge et le Noir* also a novel? If *Monte Cristo* is a novel what about *l'Assommoir*? Is it possible to compare Goethe's *les Affinités électives,* Dumas' *les Trois Mousquetaires* and Zola's *Germinal*? Which of these works is a novel? On what imaginary criteria can the distinction be based? Where do they come from? Who established them? On what principles, what authority and what arguments?

The novelist's argument is well founded and we could add to his list a number of titles—multinational and very dissimilar—which would further confirm it. For we might ask the reviewer what *The Trial* has in common with *Gone with the Wind, Lolita* with *Anna Karenina, No Orchids for Miss Blandish* with *Du Côté de chez Swann* or Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie,* while stressing the fact that such comparisons, drawn at random from the latest catalogue of our vast universal library, are not by a long stretch among the most ludicrous. And, strictly speaking, the reviewer ought to admit that, until rules have been laid down which, where ignored, preclude a work from being included in the category

"novel"; and so long as he does not know what makes the use of the term legitimate or, on the contrary, proscribes it from being applied to past, present, or future works, he must defer his judgment.

For the novelist then the novel's power resides precisely in its total freedom. For the critic, on the other hand, such freedom is highly suspect. He feels that some kind of boundaries should be established. But in the absence of any known rules he can only trust his own personal taste and particular state of mind to decide where they should stand—and thus as a rule "his taste is law" as Remy de Gourmont suggests. This naturally creates a state of permanent conflict, which might perhaps have been avoided if at least the grammarian's definition of the term could provide some sort of basis for an agreement. But what indeed have dictionaries and encyclopedias to say about the novel? For *Littré* it is "a fictitious story written in prose where the author depicts emotions, actions or strange adventures in order to capture his reader's interest." True this only applies to the modern novel; when written in medieval French it is described as "a true or fictitious tale." Whence it can be deduced that the distinction between fiction and truth is not decisive, or that it is only so in the case of the modern novel which (but why?) is denied the right to "truth" enjoyed by its predecessor. If the modern novel is necessarily "fictitious,"[4] the many novels based on historical events or on news items (*War and Peace, le Rouge et le Noir*) cannot be considered as novels, nor indeed as literature, since they have no place elsewhere. Moreover what does "fiction" and "truth" signify in a sphere where even empirical data are not experienced but written and therefore interpreted? Is "novelistic truth" identical, similar or simply analogous to "real truth"? What vouchsafes the proper transition from one to the other? The nineteenth-century *Larousse* is no more concerned than *Littré* with such crucial problems, which it settles with a similar opposition of classical ("a true or fictitious story") and contemporary novels ("a prose narrative of imaginary adventures invented and contrived to engross the reader"). Once again the grammarian appears to take for granted the fact that contemporary novels are the product of imagination, while their traditional counterparts are naturally more akin to history. However such a position is only tenable when the story is considered exclusively from the point of view of its plot, without taking into account all the factors an author can and must exploit to realize his purpose. But the subject matter, where it can be labeled, will only give a precise idea of the novel's value when it corresponds entirely to the author's overt intention: that is if he makes it clear from the start that he set out to write a historical, erotic, popular or detective novel. Otherwise we would have to classify *The Trial* and *Crime and Punishment* as detective stories, *Moby Dick* as a sailor's yarn and *Robinson Crusoe* as an adventure story—a logical classification if you will, but quite ridiculous in view of all the factors it ignores which constitute the particular significance of each of these works. Whether the subject is based on reality or is purely fictional is not what makes a novel. Still less can it be expected to clarify the relation between "true" and "fictional" which is infinitely more complex than the dictionaries' peremptory opposition would lead us to believe. Indeed strictly speaking anything is "fiction" in a world created for the sole purpose of writing about it: however it is

treated and in whatever way it is conveyed the novel's reality is fictive or, more precisely, it is always the reality of fiction, where fictional characters are fictionally born, fictionally die and have fictional adventures. In this respect *Gulliver's Travels* is neither more or less real than *Madame Bovary; The Castle* than *David Copperfield;* or *Don Quixote* than a novel by the Goncourts or by Zola. Kafka's Prague is not less real than Dickens' London or Dostoevsky's St. Petersburg; the three cities only possess the empirical reality of the books that created them, the reality of objects that are not substitutes for something else but are actually there among the rest of our world's real objects. The degree of reality of a novel is not something quantifiable; it depends on the amount of illusion the writer chooses to activate.

Fantastic or realistic, utopian or naturalistic, "fictitious" or true, whatever relation it may claim to have with reality, a novel's subject matter can thus never provide a reliable criterion for defining the genre, since it is never more than a strictly literary structure having no other connection with empirical reality than that of pure convention. Neither can it serve for purposes of classification, since to subdivide novels according to their subject matter—geographical or historical environment, social standing or profession of the main characters—doubtless gives some indication of the illusion the writer maintains with his readers' complicity, but reveals nothing as to what gives each individual category the right to claim it is a novel. Furthermore the different dictionary definitions can never be exhaustive, for the novel's peculiarity consists in its freedom to choose its characters with their environments and social circumstances, and to manipulate them at will (it can even be totally "unfocused" if it wants, for there are as yet no rules to which it must adhere); thus theoretically there is no reason why the novel's subdivisions should not correspond to every conceivable human environment, trade, profession—not to mention all the books whose subject matter is too singular or insignificant to warrant any kind of classification. Thus the twenty-odd subdivisions the dictionaries provide could be supplemented by whatever ideas or events the inventive novelist may contrive to exploit. But even when such a list has been completed, unclassifiable "fantasies" will continue to crop up that will require new subdivisions if they are not to be misfiled. This is the main drawback of the system since classifications according to subject matter[5] can never in the nature of things be exhaustive, and though they are extendable they tend to fragment rather than to unify. Moreover it does not serve the purpose of criticism since it destroys the notion of genre—which is the only valid notion in the circumstances—before it has been established.

Thus although grammarians are satisfied, most definitions fail to solve the problem of reality which continues to divide succeeding generations of novelists and critics. True, there is a tendency to take it rather more seriously nowadays, though inferences are rarely drawn (except in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* where the *Oxford English Dictionary* entry is discussed in great detail). The 1964 *Robert* for instance defines the novel as "an imaginary work in prose of considerable length, which presents as real certain characters living in a given environment and describes their attitudes, fate and adventures." This is obviously an improvement, especially since "presents as real" introduces the

preliminary supposition, the "as if" on which fiction survives exclusively—though it tries very hard to make us forget it. However the formula is too vague—or too precise, for here paradoxically vague and precise are one, as in the case of most definitions—for it implies that the intention to deceive is common to all novelists, almost a warranty of their trade. Whereas, in fact, the desire to mislead, to "ring true," is by no means general in a field where everything is permissible, even intentional improbability, incredibility or unreality. Though illusions of reality may be the novelist's favorite device, there are many novelists—not the least among them—who, far from attempting to pass off their characters as real, overtly stress the fictive nature of their creations. Such were Swift, Hoffmann and Kafka, to name only three of the greatest among those who established their reality on the negation of common experience and in favor of the fantastic and utopian, without for that deserving any less than Balzac, Dickens, Zola or other "illusionists" of reality, the title of novelist. It is the novel's great privilege to be under no definite obligation other than that which it assumes or ought to assume in its own right. Moreover the desire for verisimilitude is not more legitimate in the circumstances than the opposite desire, though it may seem more natural or more consistent with our preconceptions. Whether the novel chooses to "ring true" or to flout reality, it cannot be classified according to its intentions: every intention is permissible though none can claim to have the backing of a law.

The inadequacy of definitions should thus discourage criticism. If it is true, as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* openly suggests, that the term "novel" is simply a time-honored convention and therefore reveals nothing about its object; if it is also true "that critics have questioned the existence of a fictional genre or described the novel as too vast, varied and amorphous to be considered as a genre or a literary form," then we must resign ourselves to the fact that it can only be apprehended empirically and always anew; quite unsystematically, in fact, since no generalization is possible on the subject. However, judging by the number of specialized books, this is far from being the case: as the genre gets older and looser, even more intricate, elusive and anarchic, so the need to constrain it within the boundaries of law and order increases—the need, that is, to restrict, if not deny its freedom. Since all criticism requires a general law, and in the circumstances the licit and the illicit are theoretically indistinguishable, the novelist is judged instead according to standards of right and wrong in the same way as his public or private actions might be assessed. Of course the novel is not the only genre to suffer from the tyrannical Thou Shalt of philosophers and moralists; similar laws and restrictions borrowed piecemeal from empirical reality are imposed on all advanced literature and incessantly call art to order. But the novel, because of its inherent anarchy, its natural lack of organization and of respect both for tradition and society, is more vulnerable than most traditional forms to the restrictions moral censorship would impose on imagination's freedom and lawlessness. Since the novel is so ill-defined and disorganized, and consequently at the mercy of overbearing imaginary desires, its theoreticians must be of necessity primarily fault-finders and its critics moral assessors.

That the novelist has contributed in no small measure to the misunder-

standings from which he is the first to suffer, is another fact that transpires from the dictionary entries already mentioned, whose inconclusiveness is amply compensated for by salutary warnings—sententious remarks, commonplaces and rules of conduct suggesting what the novel ought to be rather than what it actually is. By and large such cautions obviously stress the anarchy of the genre, but they represent no more than a cross-section of opinions or, at best, a certain amount of optimism. Individually, however, each one expresses a supposedly self-evident principle which, as such, can be neither refuted nor proved, whence its apparent weightiness. For example, Voltaire asserts that "History relates what has been, a good novel what should be"; for Huet "a fable represents what has not and could not have occurred, a novel represents what might have but has not occurred"; the same writer further declares that "antiquity had no novels because at the time women were slaves." A professor (Villemain) announces from his rostrum: "Gentlemen, this much must be said: the eloquent, passionate, moral and virtuous novel is the epic of a modern nation." Naturally none of these opinions is seriously motivated and each writer puts forward his own as if it were self-evident. But what entitles the novel to improve on history? What peculiarities enable it to represent history for female readers exclusively? How can it contrive to be both passionate and exemplary? The improvised theoretician has no time for such questions (indeed, they will not be asked till the Russian structuralists appear on the scene and the notion of a theory is considered seriously for the first time). He states a fact which he takes for granted (the novel is . . . , the novel represents . . .) and which therefore has to be imperative ("the novel is" should be read as "the novel must"). Thus the genre as a whole comes under a supreme jurisdiction so unequivocally competent that it cannot be questioned, not even by those mainly concerned. History (true or idealized, past or present), Ethics (from the most elevated to the utterly trivial or the mere observation of conventions), Truth (religious, philosophical or metaphysical)—all such extra-literary categories are erected as so many "courts of justice" before which the novel is summoned. To date the novel has never *officially* enjoyed the freedom to which it is and should be entitled. For the movements which succeed each other in their endeavor to "set it free" simply replace a court of justice deemed outmoded by a new one (thus we have the rule of experimental science, of realism, socialist or otherwise, of social engagement, etc.) no less tyrannical and no more competent than the last. True, the novel continues to thrive, undisciplined and licentious as ever, but so torn between innumerable external compulsions and swayed by the inextricable combination of ethics and aesthetics which is seen as a peculiarity of this art, that its creation, inevitably accompanied by guilt, occurs in a state of inner conflict whereby it usually evades one form of tyranny only to succumb to another.

The worst enemies of the novel's freedom are those who demand it most urgently. This much is clear from all the requests writers have made—starting in the eighteenth century and continuing right through the nineteenth—that fictional liberty be both restricted and appreciated, that it should be controlled while nonetheless they condone its wildest extravagance. After Defoe—who declined the title of novelist to avoid any association with a false and futile

genre—the novel was unstintingly granted all the natural characteristics most incompatible with those tradition had formerly favored. Not only was it no longer (as it remains for *Littré*) a "fictitious love story skilfully written in prose for the delectation of readers," but it had become a public asset endowed with specific qualities which enabled it to further the cause of righteousness and truth. The author of *Manon Lescaut* did not hesitate to assert that "this work is, from start to finish, a Moral Treatise in the guise of a pleasant pastime."[6] And we should not be misled by the statement's artlessness—or artfulness: in the following century such assertions became, if more considered, sophisticated or apparently cynical, no less current among even the foremost writers—apart from the odd exception such as Flaubert in France and James in America. As a matter of fact, though morality has undergone many a change since the days when it could be pleasantly disguised as a love story (at the expense of pleasure which has become increasingly suspect), moral principles are more and more indispensable to the novelist, especially when his style or subject matter might suggest a certain moral laxity.

"Fiction," says Madame de Staël, "should reveal the mystery of our fate through our virtues and our passions." "Perhaps," suggests George Sand, "the story-teller's art consists in making the guilty and the unhappy, whom he would save and comfort, take an interest in their own fate." The same writer credits romantic fiction with the power to "alienate the reader from sin, immunize him with a shot of realism." And Victor Hugo: "So long as the three problems of the present century—man's degradation through poverty, woman's degradation through starvation and the stunting of children through darkness . . . so long as ignorance and need are on earth, books like this (*Les Misérables*) will not have been written in vain." Thus the novel is not the frivolous, deceitful genre tradition mistrusted but, indeed, a medium for progress, an immensely efficient instrument which, in the hands of a conscientious novelist can become a real public asset. It brings the sinner back to the fold, comforts the needy and highlights the horrors of individual and social injustice. In other words it has a mission which it accomplishes either by transmitting its message through the plot or, more subtly, by creating stimulating examples; or again by revealing life's seamier side, for it can describe evil, without forgoing its purity. This last method which consists, in fact, in curing evil by evil, is usually invoked when a writer is in danger of being attacked on moral, religious or political grounds. Thus Barbey d'Aurevilly exclaims: "Yes passion is revolutionary and that is why it is essential to expose its strange and abominable glamor. It is for the sake of Order that the history of Revolution is worth writing." And Sainte Beauve, more guardedly, in his preface to *Volupté:* "Can the difficult cure of such a vice be attempted otherwise than in secret? . . . That is a question I considered at great length. Then . . . I gradually realized that the publication of an honest work could hardly add to the sum of evil, and that it might even do some good to some people." Other writers have been far less cautious on this henceforth vital subject of fictional truth. Following his famous statement about "competing with the registry office," Balzac declared that he was unquestionably superior to the various scholars whose specialities *la Comédie humaine* exploits: "I have excelled the historian, I am freer." In such

cases freedom and truth mutually reinforce one another. A novel is true insofar as it is free to understand and to express everything; it is true because it is in direct contact with existence whose mysteries it instinctively solves. Such was Zola's contention concerning the "experimental novel" inspired by the methods of experimental science but free from the restrictions that constrict its scope. Zola too excels Claude Bernard whose methods served as a model for his own, since Zola does not confine his work to collecting and classifying data in order to deduce general laws; he has the means and the right—and thus the obligation—to assess them: "We novelists are the examining magistrates of men and of their passions." The story-tellers of old could not have dreamt of such a reversal! Where once they were pleasure-seekers trading on the notorious collusion of idle pastime and deceit, henceforth they are cast in such weighty roles as scientist, priest, doctor, psychologist, sociologist, judge and historian (without even having to assume their responsibilities, since they are only answerable to the tribunal of their calling—the tribunal of aesthetics). Moreover, as substitutes for every expert in human thought and activity, they have the advantage over each of these of being free, farseeing, profound and gifted with an unmediated knowledge of reality and all its intricacies. Far from merely telling stories to fool themselves and their readers they are credited with sufficient innate truthfulness, rightness of judgment and discrimination to make each novel a message and the wildest anecdote instructive.

Since such requirements cannot be theoretically defined, the novelist simply asserts them brutally in a manner that leaves no room for discussion and is not a little disturbing. Maybe if the novel were more assured of its own truthfulness it would not have to make such a great show of sincerity. Indeed why should it be so keen on assuming all the onus of reality besides imitating it, if it did not want to make amends for its actual inadequacies and shelve its responsibility? This plea for sincerity which serves to avert inquiry reflects less a desire for clarity than an uneasy desire to justify itself. It is a symptom of guilt, of the bad conscience from which it has always suffered and which, instead of abating is, on the contrary, aggravated by the progress of modernism. The modern novel, at least insofar as it aims at truth, will achieve nothing unless it overtly abandons the flights of fancy on which its frivolous reputation has rested for so long. However such a break is the one thing it cannot make, except in theory. Moreover in trying to make us believe otherwise, the novel can only sink further into its congenital vice, which consists precisely in pretending that it is not lying while simultaneously consolidating the delusions it creates by wilfully exploiting its resemblance to reality (delusions are never more successful than when they disown their true nature). Virginia Woolf, with the common sense of a profound intellect, suggests that the novel is the only form of art which tries to make us believe that it gives a complete and truthful account of a real person's life. Which sums up the whole problem; for the genre's originality and paradox consist in thus "trying to make us believe"; in the wilful delusion always created in the name of truth but for the sole purpose of deceiving (unlike all other literary genres, or even all other forms of art, where the thing represented is shown together with the method of representation). Such an insight makes the question of truth and untruth a little

clearer; the novel is neither true nor untrue but merely creates the illusion of being one or the other. In other words it can only choose between two ways of deceiving, between two kinds of deceit which exploit the reader's gullibility in unequal proportions. For either a story does not pretend to anything else and reveals even its texture, the conventions to which it has decided to submit; or it masquerades as reality, in which case it must naturally beware of betraying its intention to delude. Since the most innocent lies are the most obvious, a novel can only be convincingly truthful when it is utterly deceitful, with all the skill and earnestness required to ensure the success of its deception. This is one of the reasons for its megalomania—it can do anything since it can make us believe anything without revealing that it is doing so—and for its vague but nonetheless profound sense of guilt which it partially alleviates by indulging in crime fiction.

The novel's truth is never more than its greater ability to delude. But from what does such an ability derive and, more important, what reason is there for the irresistible urge to exert it? Though such questions may not trouble theoreticians, popular opinion knows the answer, or so it would seem, judging by certain expressions which sum up its views. Thus in current parlance story-telling and lies are so intimately related that they share the same discredit. However such synonymy is more ambiguous than it might appear, for it presupposes a reciprocity between the two terms, a natural relation, which is not wholly detrimental to art (art is less degraded by its association with falsehood than falsehood is upgraded). Thus we say of some incredible piece of gossip: "It's pure fiction"; while "It was better than fiction!" implies that it was too extraordinary or moving to be classed among normal events. In the first case fiction stands simply for untruth; in the other it represents an experience or event unheard of in everyday life and far more thrilling and beautiful. The same *double entendre* can be found in the French expression *faire un roman* which, according to *Littré,* has two distinct meanings: either "to capture the heart of a person of higher social standing, as in popular love stories," or "to report events otherwise than they occurred"; that is, either to *behave* like the hero of a romance, or to *lie* like a novelist or writer of romances. The way deceit switches here from action to words, forces us to admit that fiction does not lie in vain, but possesses a power which it wields without scruple or sincerity. Thus popular opinion ignores the theoretical alternative—a novel is either true and beneficent or untrue and noxious—by which critics stubbornly abide (if only to their greater discomfort). According to the popular view deceit and fictional action are not only easily compatible, but there is a definite relation of dependence, almost of causality between fiction's deceitfulness and its success. The novel is not successful despite the "stories" it tells but because of them; precisely because of its tendentiousness and the delusions it chooses to serve. Since the novel's purpose is to deceive, lying is the law by which it abides and to which there is little point in being unfaithful since its reality derives from it.

Doubtless according to popular opinion the novel is no better nor worse than reality. But neither is it a pointless imitation of reality. For if reality is permanently beyond its reach, nevertheless it has access to it at one crucial

point and that is in its endeavor to transform it. *Faire un roman* is to express a desire for change which can be satisfied in one of two ways: either by altering *what is,* or by altering *who one is* through an alliance with someone above one's standing. However, both solutions are a rejection of empirical reality for a personal dream presumed to be attainable by dint of deceit and charm. The conquest of a world thus deceived and charmed can only be achieved once its hierarchies have been rejected. Thus the man who decides to use women as a means to social success is primarily a rebel, one who refuses to accept the circumstances into which he was born and undertakes to revise his personal biography. Unlike the tragic or epic hero who endures the fate he stands for, the *faiseur de roman* is by intent a disturber of the peace who scorns degree and rank even while he attempts to attain the highest. He is a social climber whose hopes are based on intrigue and mythomania. But he is furthermore someone whose mind is set on freedom, who refuses to accept the irreversibility of existence; who is in revolt against preconceived ideas and pre-established situations; who is subversive in spite of his fundamental conventionality. With his complex aspirations—responsible both for his insignificance and for the sort of heroism to which his initial impulse testifies all the same—the *faiseur de roman* is well equipped to establish that contact between dream and reality to which he apparently owes his rather dubious reputation. For although he is unquestionably a dreamer, his dreams refer to reality, since his aim is to alter it. And although he deliberately refashions his life, his dynamic faith in change and in the powers of imagination constitutes, nevertheless, a highly instructive example. For if it is true, as popular opinion suggests, that he epitomizes the essence of romanticism, then his subversive rejection of things as they are may help us to understand the real novelist's vocation.

Is the novelist a *faiseur de roman* who writes instead of acting out his dreams in order that his fictions may provide a stimulating model for those who share his thirst for success? The difference between acting and writing is not so great as to preclude such a possibility. But before seeking a more solid basis for the parallel it may be noted that, insofar as the aims and means of the *faiseur* are straightforward in the extreme, he provides a more rewarding specimen for observation than his over-complex and ambiguous counterpart. At first sight his scheme—to wed above his condition—might seem too limited to sum up the practically boundless possibilities the novel is able to present. But on further inspection it becomes clear that it could stand for the exemplary romantic act and hence become proverbial. For it combines love and ambition, falsehood and truth, reality and imagination in such a way that it suffices to vary the pattern's disposition to obtain an endless number of unprecedented situations—more or less complex, restricted or idealized, but all involving a basic desire for change (a desire that might well account for the pursuit of progress the novel's history reveals together with a tendency for ideological and formal innovations). Without even having to invoke Rastignac or Julien Sorel, whose aims are overtly those of the *faiseur* (nor, for that matter, Balzac who admitted that, for him, to have achieved an aristocratic marriage was more important than the success of *la Comédie humaine*), there is no doubt that the novel differs from every other literary and artistic form in that it is

able—not, as is usually believed, to reproduce reality—but to stimulate life in order to provide it with ever new situations and different ways of combining its ingredients. The general notion that the novel has a dual emotional and social mission is not unfounded, though the interdependence of the two is not usually obvious. For love is essential to it as a powerful motive for the great upheavals it takes such pleasure in inscribing in its spurious registry office; while it is intimately concerned with society, since that is where all the human categories and situations it intends to *displace* are evolved. Thanks to its compulsive recasting—which might well be the secret of its popularity as of its elusive unity—it exploits at will the resources of utopia, of satire (in spite of its ambiguity and its ultimate need for orthodoxy, a critical tendency is inseparable from such a vocation), even of metaphysics or philosophy, when it is able to take its hero's inevitable onslaughts on reality seriously. Its parasitic, protean nature doubtless reflects the rebellious, go-ahead, upstart who apes it in the lower ranges of ambition; but so, unquestionably, does its monumental inconsistency and the opacity that makes it so exasperating a literary specimen. Indeed, by virtue of its initial plan of conquest, it can only be simultaneously democratic and conservative[7] (even when it claims to be totally committed); dare-devil and thrusting (even when its aims are most respectable);[8] liberated and despotic, typically middle-class, order-loving and restless. Little wonder in the circumstances that it should either remain undefined or be forced into a mold. For it knows no law but the utopian desire to which it is rooted—a meaningless desire within established literary conventions, a desire whose existence is restricted to the frontier between literature and psychology, where the novel does not, perhaps, reveal what it is so much as what it wants, that toward which it is striving by means of its apparently arbitrary structural and ideological growth. So that is where we must now venture. Not indeed to fetter it with a new set of abstract regulations, but to try and discover the basic nucleus which alone can account for its culture and its primitivism, its social influence and its individualism, and for its profound unity despite its generic vagueness. In other words, to take the plunge and reconstruct its private history—or simply the primal novel.

Notes

1. *Don Quixote* is certainly the first "modern" novel, if modernity is understood as the self-searching, self-questioning literary movement which uses as subject matter its own doubt and belief in the value of its message. *Robinson Crusoe* can claim another sort of priority: it is "modern" insofar as it expresses very clearly the tendencies of the mercantile middle class which emerged from the English Revolution. Thus it has been possible to assert that the novel is a middle-class genre and that, before it became international and universal it was specifically English. Further analysis will reveal the similarities and the differences between "Crusoism" and "Quixotery."

2. Of course Defoe does not tell us what it is that makes pure fiction true. Can fictitious illusions that are false by definition be truer in some cases than in others? And how? But then, are we entitled to condemn an eighteenth-century author for not having solved problems that we are not much nearer to solving today?

3. Albert Thibaudet, an expert on the novel, has restricted his efforts to dividing the different kinds of novel with which we are familiar into a given number of catego-

ries: family novels, adventure stories, highbrow novels, amusing novels, painful novels, etc. This is a more subtle version of the usual classification according to subject matter, which can also be done according to the strata of society in which it is enacted or to its characters' class and profession (thus the nineteenth-century edition of *Larousse* refers to the religious novel and even to the hunting novel). Classifications by nation (English, Russian, German novels, etc.) correspond to the same need to reduce the chaos to some kind of order. But however much we multiply the novel's subdivisions, the resulting variety cannot explain the genre, which is invariable.

4. Incidentally such a definition clashes with the English notion of the "novel," which was originally seen as the relation of real events or, in other words, as a chronicle. *Littré's* definition would apply more exactly to the "romance," which is purely imaginary. But, as *The Oxford English Dictionary* observes, "novel" and "romance" are not strongly contrasting categories, and English novelists have frequently combined them.

5. The same could be said of "national" classifications which, however useful they may be for a study of national literatures, throw no light on the concept of the novel.

6. Preface to *Manon Lescaut* in *Anthologie des Préfaces de romans français du XIXe siècle,* Juillard, 1964, p. 43.

7. A novel's conservatism may be expressed in its political bias or its ideology, but its democracy resides in the very movement that enables it to exist. This much is confirmed by ethnologists who report that fiction is unknown among caste societies or primitive populations whose social structure is firmly fixed by tradition. "No novels spells theocracy" writes Etiemble; "theocracy spells no novels!" (*C'est le Bouquet,* p. 227).

8. The novelist's social ambitions—source and caricature of his highest spiritual aspirations—are one of the obscure yet significant themes underlying Kafka's *The Castle:* K., the Land Surveyor whom Kafka saddles with a vocation for honest, realistic and total art, is no better, in the eyes of the Castle authorities, than a common social climber who uses women as a means to his ends.

Part Two

The Novel as Displacement I: Structuralism

MODERNITY CONJOINS SEVERAL, seemingly contradictory, developments: the emergence of the novel genre; the decay of the genre system; and the movement to replace the historical theory of the novel by the transhistorical theory of narrative. To this we may add the fact that some of the most powerful efforts to historicize the theory of the novel have been formulated in reaction to what Northrop Frye calls the "novel-centered" view of narrative. In this familiar view, the novel tends to be conceived as the normative culmination of an evolution from lesser, more "primitive," narrative forms. Against this view theorists have proposed a contrary, devolutionary model of narrative change according to which the novel is seen as a falling off from more foundational modes of narration. This and the following part take up two related versions of the devolutionary model, sponsored respectively by structuralist and psychoanalytic theory.

Although he is in no strict sense a structuralist, Walter Benjamin's reflections on the sociocultural role of the storyteller have deep affinities with the evocative retrospection characteristic of structuralist analysis that undergoes historicization. For Benjamin, storytelling occupies the place of pristine narrative practice, a place that in other writers may be filled instead by myth, epic, or romance. For all such writers, however, it is the belated form of the novel that lies on the other side of the great historical watershed between tradition and modernity, whose force Benjamin suggests through a series of powerful antitheses: intelligence versus information, experiential wisdom versus empirical verification, chronicle versus history, interpretation versus explanation, reminiscence versus remembrance. Accompanying these conceptual pairings are their sociomaterial conditions: community versus solitude, face-to-face craftsmanship versus mechanical reproduction, the artisanal versus the middle class. Benjamin's interest is therefore historical: concerned both with the temporal persistence and with the structural relationality of discursive form.

The definitive generic differential in both these senses pertains, for Benjamin, to the technology of cultural production and preservation; it's the differential between orality and print. "The art of repeating stories," storytelling demands an audience "self-forgetful" enough to permit the memory to retain

and reproduce narrative, to transmit it "from generation to generation" and so contribute to "the web which all stories together form in the end." Implicit in Benjamin's account is the understanding of orality as a cultural mechanism for sustaining the ongoingness of tradition by invisibly accommodating change to the continuity of what has always been known. When knowledge is preserved not in the memory but in objective transcription—first in writing and then in print—what's lost is the ability to adjust the new to the old telling of the story. Discrepancies between different versions, thrown into relief by the possibility of objective comparison, gradually destroy the subjective impression of continuity, substituting for the value of wisdom and perpetuity the value of verification, innovation, novelty—and the novel.

By choosing a nineteenth-century novelist as his exemplary storyteller, Benjamin makes clear that the difference he describes, although paradigmatically diachronic, may also exist within a single synchronic era of rapid modernization like his and our own. The structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss confirms this point. Like Benjamin, he tells a devolutionary story of melancholy and loss. Unlike Benjamin, Lévi-Strauss describes the difference between a homeostatic and a dynamic mechanism of producing narrative with scarcely any recourse to the material technologies of orality, literacy, and print. The first selection from Lévi-Strauss provides an overview of this difference in terms that are fundamental to much of his work. The subsequent selections, comparatively marginal within his life project of elaborating a "science of mythology," speculatively address the question of what happens when myth breaks down and degenerates into something else.

The stabilizing function of "the savage mind" consists in the way it coordinates images of nature and culture. Lévi-Strauss calls this coordination a "homology between *two systems of differences*" so as to emphasize the indirection with which nature and culture are aligned. Group cultural identity is perpetually problematic because demographic and other sorts of material change continually challenge identity with the evidence of difference. Rather than deny this evidence, the savage mind discovers within nature itself a set of models of difference and analogizes them to problems of cultural difference. But although it may be conceived differentially, the natural order is experientially cyclical and constant as the domain of culture, left to itself, never can be. The savage mind conceives nature and culture as an original and a derivative series, once linked but now separate. "The two series exist in time but under an atemporal regime, since, both being real, they sail through time together, remaining such as they were at the moment of separation. The original series is always there, ready to serve as a system of reference for the interpretation and rectification of the changes taking place in the derivative series." If, however, culture conceives nature not as a separate model of difference but as a repository of elements each of which is directly aligned with its own, the stabilizing force of the natural domain as a distinct system of reference will be lost. "Two images, one social and the other natural, and each articulated separately, will be replaced by a socio-natural image, single but fragmented."

According to Lévi-Strauss, the transformations of a given myth sustain and reproduce this fundamental reference system despite the more ostenta-

tious variations they introduce. To understand the meaning of myths we must read "below" the diachronic linearity of their telling, in which elements of nature and culture are directly and metonymically linked to one another, so as to grasp the synchronic, metaphorical relationship between nature and culture that is the key to both their structure and their function (as Lévi-Strauss writes elsewhere, "the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction").[1] To put this another way, the differential form of myths "is of much greater importance than their content." By another (but complementary) route than Benjamin's recourse to oral mnemonics, this helps account for the repetitive quality of myth, whose systematic structure controls and contains the evolutionary dynamism of temporal process.

In the second reading, Lévi-Strauss represents the deterioration of mythic structure—of metaphor into metonymy, synchrony into diachrony, static system into dynamic "history"—as the decay of tight cohesion into the elastic inclusiveness of merely episodic narrative. Although the overarching movement in this long-term decay is one from mythic to novelistic narrative, its pattern is exemplified (in a characteristically complicating gesture)[2] by two parallel developments. First, highly structured myths analogizing the different cultural associations of heavenly bodies with differences in their natural periodicities degenerate into loosely episodic myths in which the relation between cultural and natural elements has become direct. Second, the novel itself degenerates from a relatively compact structure to its "ultimate and debased state," that of the serial. The movements are parallel because in each case, an earlier analogy between differences in cultural images and those in natural periodicities has been transformed into the direct subjection of culture to nature. But the subservience of the serial novel to the "natural" periods of journalistic publication is far greater than that of episodic myth to lunar periods; and so the structural parallel between episodic myth and serial novel is overbalanced by the historical devolution from myth to novel.

From the point of view of genre theory, the richly figurative and powerfully elegiac strains with which Lévi-Strauss narrates this devolution adumbrate an image of the novel as profoundly "generic" precisely through its entanglement in "history." His language evokes two distinct states of knowledge. On the one hand, the novel is like a "dream," its author only "dimly aware" of, and "haunted" by, the "secret" of its originary but evanescent structure. On the other hand, the normative knowledge of structure is replaced by an ambiguous sort of self-knowledge: "[T]he hero of the novel is the novel itself. It tells its

1. "The Structural Study of Myth," in *Structural Anthropology* (I), trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke G. Schoepf (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1967), 226.

2. One achievement of this complication is to display Lévi-Strauss applying structuralist method to the reading of history itself. The diachronic evolution of the novel from the decay of myth, an apparently single series, may nonetheless be read synchronically as the repetition and redoubling of mythic by novelistic evolution, that is, as the structural analogy of myth and novel. But how can structuralist method so crisply illuminate the domain of history, which it conceives as devoid of structure? At moments like this, Lévi-Strauss's commitment to the structuralist equation of history with diachrony comes up against the Marxist view of history as the dialectical coextension of diachrony and synchrony.

own story." The loss of traditional wisdom seems here to entail a "gain" in, not Benjamin's empirical objectivity, but reflexivity. The two are perhaps grounded in a common element of detachment and distance, which is clarified in the passage from tropes of the "real" to those of the "symbolic" and thence to the "imaginary," a passage Lévi-Strauss correlates with the degeneration of mythic structure. In the third reading he varies the terms of this passage—from "literal" to "metaphorical" to "contiguous" tropes—while sustaining the sense of a transition toward both greater detachment and greater reflexivity; in the passage from myth to romance, "the initial myth . . . appears as its own metaphor."

The third reading also provides two variations on Lévi-Strauss's structuralist themes. First, this account of the "death" of myth makes some effort to avoid the devolutionary bias of the second reading ("This formula degenerates or evolves, as you will"). More important, it explicitly conceives the transformation of discursive categories as a matter of spatial as well as temporal movement, a conception that will be central to our interest in the dissemination of the novel genre after its European origins. The fourth and final reading from Lévi-Strauss exemplifies how, in the hands of its most acute practitioner, structuralism's elaboration of synchronic analogies may fuel a highly speculative, but strikingly suggestive, historiography of "replacement"—of mythology by music and the novel, of the modern novel by serial music, of myth by the structuralist discourse on myth. Here Lévi-Strauss invites us to compare the reflexiveness of the novel with that of another modern mode, structural anthropology itself.[3]

Northrop Frye's overview of the great literary "modes" underscores the problems attendant on a historiography that's derived from structuralist method. His category "mode" occupies a place midway between "genre" in the usual, historical sense of the term and the transhistorical category of mode as "universal." Frye correlates a "sequence" of five modes—the mythic, romance, high mimetic, low mimetic, and ironic—with "the five epochs of Western literature": "[l]ooking over this table, we can see that European fiction, during the last fifteen centuries, has steadily moved its center of gravity down the list." But what is it that's moving? The idea of historical change depends on a compound of continuity and discontinuity, which designates both difference over time and that element of identity without which the notion that something has changed lacks all meaning. In Frye's scheme, difference is represented by "social context," "plausible content," "reality," and the "world," whereas identity inheres in "literary form" or "imagination." But if form and content, identity and difference, structure and history are dichotomously distinguished, the result is a literary history in which literature never changes. The history of forms is paradoxically devoid of history. Form doesn't happen in history; rather, history happens to form.

Several figures of speech help Frye specify the nature of this process. To say that the principles of literary form remain constant even as form "adapts" or "adjusts" to content or context by taking on plausibility suggests an accre-

3. But see *Origin,* where the comparison is formulated as a contrast.

tive, layering, or covering effect whereby form and content/context are, as inside and outside, juxtaposed but unassimilated. Similarly, the figure of "displacement" asks us to see literary form or structure as having its originary "place" in "pure myth," and to be "displaced" into other modes that "censor," obscure, or otherwise rarefy form to make it plausible or credible, but still essentially the same.[4] Despite the negative charge of the "displacement" figure, the normative language of devolution and decay is relatively muted in Frye, perhaps because his separation of structure and history, more absolutely dichotomous than Lévi-Strauss's, thereby obviates the idea of form's vulnerabilty to the invasive forces of content/context. Like Lévi-Strauss, Frye conceives literary history as a passage from tropes of highly "significant" presence (metaphor, simile) to "incidental" or "accidental" tropes of distance, but he doesn't also conclude that the more displaced modes are also more reflexive.

Frye's concern here is principally with the mode of realism (or the "low mimetic") rather than with the genre of the novel. Still, it's not hard to see how his historical method diverges from that proposed by the theorists of genre, especially when he treats the genre itself as a parodic technique (*Secular Scripture*). We might expect the association of displacement with parody to make explicit the novelistic element of reflexivity. Frye's discussion here seems partial, however, in the sense that only part of the parodic motive—the imitative impulse—is acknowledged; the critical impulse in parody remains invisible. Because it owes its very form to myth and romance, the novel can appear only deferential in its recapitulation of its predecessors and not also subversive of them.

The novel according to structuralism lacks the historical contingency of genre because its form is fully pregiven by the determinant mythic form it seeks to obscure. Despite his expansion of Lévi-Strauss's two-part periodization (tradition and modernity) to five epochs, the temporal mechanism implicit in Frye's displacement metaphor would have us fold each successive period into its predecessor. In this respect, the contribution of structuralism to a historical theory of the novel may best be seen in the corrective it provides to the equally partial "novel-centered" view of narrative. Indeed, the onesidedness of each may be linked to the narrative form each takes as normative. Just as the ideal type of myth and romance plots embodies formulaic and repetitive semantic structures, so structuralism conceives history as a synchronic structure of analogical variations on a single paradigm. By the same token, just as the ideal type of the novel plot is a linear and episodic elaboration of mere events, so its "macro-narrative" historical counterpart has the developmental teleology of the extended diachronic series, of one thing after another.

4. On the Freudian source of "displacement" see below, pt. 3.

6

Walter Benjamin

The Storyteller

I

Familiar though his name may be to us, the storyteller in his living immediacy is by no means a present force. He has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant. To present someone like Leskov as a storyteller does not mean bringing him closer to us but, rather, increasing our distance from him. Viewed from a certain distance, the great, simple outlines which define the storyteller stand out in him, or rather, they become visible in him, just as in a rock a human head or an animal's body may appear to an observer at the proper distance and angle of vision. This distance and this angle of vision are prescribed for us by an experience which we may have almost every day. It teaches us that the art of storytelling is coming to an end. Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences.

One reason for this phenomenon is obvious: experience has fallen in value. And it looks as if it is continuing to fall into bottomlessness. Every glance at a newspaper demonstrates that it has reached a new low, that our picture, not only of the external world but of the moral world as well, overnight has undergone changes which were never thought possible. With the [First] World War a process began to become apparent which has not halted since then. Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent—not richer, but poorer in communicable experience? What ten years later was poured out in the flood of war books was anything but experience that goes from mouth to mouth. And there was nothing remarkable about that. For never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power. A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body.

II

Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn. And among those who have written down the tales, it is the great ones whose written version differs least from the speech of the many nameless storytellers. Incidentally, among the last named there are two groups which, to be sure, overlap in many ways. And the figure of the storyteller gets its full corporeality only for the one who can picture them both. "When someone goes on a trip, he has something to tell about," goes the German saying, and people imagine the storyteller as someone who has come from afar. But they enjoy no less listening to the man who has stayed at home, making an honest living, and who knows the local tales and traditions. If one wants to picture these two groups through their archaic representatives, one is embodied in the resident tiller of the soil, and the other in the trading seaman. Indeed, each sphere of life has, as it were, produced its own tribe of storytellers. Each of these tribes preserves some of its characteristics centuries later. Thus, among nineteenth-century German storytellers, writers like Hebel and Gotthelf stem from the first tribe, writers like Sealsfield and Gerstäcker from the second. With these tribes, however, as stated above, it is only a matter of basic types. The actual extension of the realm of storytelling in its full historical breadth is inconceivable without the most intimate interpenetration of these two archaic types. Such an interpenetration was achieved particularly by the Middle Ages in their trade structure. The resident master craftsman and the traveling journeymen worked together in the same rooms; and every master had been a traveling journeyman before he settled down in his home town or somewhere else. If peasants and seamen were past masters of storytelling, the artisan class was its university. In it was combined the lore of faraway places, such as a much-traveled man brings home, with the lore of the past, as it best reveals itself to natives of a place.

III

Leskov was at home in distant places as well as distant times. He was a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, a man with genuine religious interests. But he was a no less sincere opponent of ecclesiastic bureaucracy. Since he was not able to get along any better with secular officialdom, the official positions he held were not of long duration. Of all his posts, the one he held for a long time as Russian representative of a big English firm was presumably the most useful one for his writing. For this firm he traveled through Russia, and these trips advanced his worldly wisdom as much as they did his knowledge of conditions in Russia. In this way he had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the organization of the sects in the country. This left its mark on his works of fiction. In the Russian legends Leskov saw allies in his fight against Orthodox bureaucracy. There are a number of his legendary tales whose focus is a righteous man, seldom an ascetic, usually a simple, active man who becomes a saint apparently in the most natural way in the world. Mystical exaltation is not Leskov's forte. Even though he occasionally liked to indulge in the miraculous, even in piousness he prefers to stick with a sturdy nature. He sees

the prototype in the man who finds his way about the world without getting too deeply involved with it.

He displayed a corresponding attitude in worldly matters. It is in keeping with this that be began to write late, at the age of twenty-nine. That was after his commercial travels. His first printed work was entitled "Why Are Books Expensive in Kiev?" A number of other writings about the working class, alcoholism, police doctors, and unemployed salesmen are precursors of his works of fiction.

IV

An orientation toward practical interests is characteristic of many born storytellers. More pronouncedly than in Leskov this trait can be recognized, for example, in Gotthelf, who gave his peasants agricultural advice; it is found in Nodier, who concerned himself with the perils of gas light; and Hebel, who slipped bits of scientific instruction for his readers into his *Schatzkästlein,* is in this line as well. All this points to the nature of every real story. It contains, openly or covertly, something useful. The usefulness may, in one case, consist in a moral; in another, in some practical advice; in a third, in a proverb or maxim. In every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers. But if today "having counsel" is beginning to have an old-fashioned ring, this is because the communicability of experience is decreasing. In consequence we have no counsel either for ourselves or for others. After all, counsel is less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story which is just unfolding. To seek this counsel one would first have to be able to tell the story. (Quite apart from the fact that a man is receptive to counsel only to the extent that he allows his situation to speak.) Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom. The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out. This, however, is a process that has been going on for a long time. And nothing would be more fatuous than to want to see in it merely a "symptom of decay," let alone a "modern" symptom. It is, rather, only a concomitant symptom of the secular productive forces of history, a concomitant that has quite gradually removed narrative from the realm of living speech and at the same time is making it possible to see a new beauty in what is vanishing.

V

The earliest symptom of a process whose end is the decline of storytelling is the rise of the novel at the beginning of modern times. What distinguishes the novel from the story (and from the epic in the narrower sense) is its essential dependence on the book. The dissemination of the novel became possible only with the invention of printing. What can be handed on orally, the wealth of the epic, is of a different kind from what constitutes the stock in trade of the novel. What differentiates the novel from all other forms of prose literature—the fairy tale, the legend, even the novella—is that it neither comes from oral tradition nor goes into it. This distinguishes it from storytelling in particular. The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening

to his tale. The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others. To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life. In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living. Even the first great book of the genre, *Don Quixote,* teaches how the spiritual greatness, the boldness, the helpfulness of one of the noblest of men, Don Quixote, are completely devoid of counsel and do not contain the slightest scintilla of wisdom. If now and then, in the course of the centuries, efforts have been made—most effectively, perhaps, in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*—to implant instruction in the novel, these attempts have always amounted to a modification of the novel form. The *Bildungsroman,* on the other hand, does not deviate in any way from the basic structure of the novel. By integrating the social process with the development of a person, it bestows the most frangible justification on the order determining it. The legitimacy it provides stands in direct opposition to reality. Particularly in the *Bildungsroman,* it is this inadequacy that is actualized.

VI

One must imagine the transformation of epic forms occurring in rhythms comparable to those of the change that has come over the earth's surface in the course of thousands of centuries. Hardly any other forms of human communication have taken shape more slowly, been lost more slowly. It took the novel, whose beginnings go back to antiquity, hundreds of years before it encountered in the evolving middle class those elements which were favorable to its flowering. With the appearance of these elements, storytelling began quite slowly to recede into the archaic; in many ways, it is true, it took hold of the new material, but it was not really determined by it. On the other hand, we recognize that with the full control of the middle class, which has the press as one of its most important instruments in fully developed capitalism, there emerges a form of communication which, no matter how far back its origin may lie, never before influenced the epic form in a decisive way. But now it does exert such an influence. And it turns out that it confronts storytelling as no less of a stranger than did the novel, but in a more menacing way, and that it also brings about a crisis in the novel. This new form of communication is information.

Villemessant, the founder of *Le Figaro,* characterized the nature of information in a famous formulation. "To my readers," he used to say, "an attic fire in the Latin Quarter is more important than a revolution in Madrid." This makes strikingly clear that it is no longer intelligence coming from afar, but the information which supplies a handle for what is nearest that gets the readiest hearing. The intelligence that came from afar—whether the spatial kind from foreign countries or the temporal kind of tradition—possessed an authority which gave it validity, even when it was not subject to verification. Information, however, lays claim to prompt verifiability. The prime requirement is that it appear "understandable in itself." Often it is no more exact than the

intelligence of earlier centuries was. But while the latter was inclined to borrow from the miraculous, it is indispensable for information to sound plausible. Because of this it proves incompatible with the spirit of storytelling. If the art of storytelling has become rare, the dissemination of information has had a decisive share in this state of affairs.

Every morning brings us the news of the globe, and yet we are poor in noteworthy stories. This is because no event any longer comes to us without already being shot through with explanation. In other words, by now almost nothing that happens benefits storytelling; almost everything benefits information. Actually, it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it. Leskov is a master at this (compare pieces like "The Deception" and "The White Eagle"). The most extraordinary things, marvelous things, are related with the greatest accuracy, but the psychological connection of the events is not forced on the reader. It is left up to him to interpret things the way he understands them, and thus the narrative achieves an amplitude that information lacks.

VII

Leskov was grounded in the classics. The first storyteller of the Greeks was Herodotus. In the fourteenth chapter of the third book of his *Histories* there is a story from which much can be learned. It deals with Psammenitus.

When the Egyptian king Psammenitus had been beaten and captured by the Persian king Cambyses, Cambyses was bent on humbling his prisoner. He gave orders to place Psammenitus on the road along which the Persian triumphal procession was to pass. And he further arranged that the prisoner should see his daughter pass by as a maid going to the well with her pitcher. While all the Egyptians were lamenting and bewailing this spectacle, Psammenitus stood alone, mute and motionless, his eyes fixed on the ground; and when presently he saw his son, who was being taken along in the procession to be executed, he likewise remained unmoved. But when afterward he recognized one of his servants, an old, impoverished man, in the ranks of the prisoners, he beat his fists against his head and gave all the signs of deepest mourning.

From this story it may be seen what the nature of true storytelling is. The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time. Thus Montaigne referred to this Egyptian king and asked himself why he mourned only when he caught sight of his servant. Montaigne answers: "Since he was already overfull of grief, it took only the smallest increase for it to burst through its dams." Thus Montaigne. But one could also say: The king is not moved by the fate of those of royal blood, for it is his own fate. Or: We are moved by much on the stage that does not move us in real life; to the king, this servant is only an actor. Or: Great grief is pent up and breaks forth only with relaxation. Seeing this servant was the relaxation. Herodotus offers no explanations. His report is the driest. That is why this story from ancient Egypt is still capable after thousands of years of arousing as-

tonishment and thoughtfulness. It resembles the seeds of grain which have lain for centuries in the chambers of the pyramids shut up air-tight and have retained their germinative power to this day.

VIII

There is nothing that commends a story to memory more effectively than that chaste compactness which precludes psychological analysis. And the more natural the process by which the storyteller forgoes psychological shading, the greater becomes the story's claim to a place in the memory of the listener, the more completely is it integrated into his own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else someday, sooner or later. This process of assimilation, which takes place in depth, requires a state of relaxation which is becoming rarer and rarer. If sleep is the apogee of physical relaxation, boredom is the apogee of mental relaxation. Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience. A rustling in the leaves drives him away. His nesting places—the activities that are intimately associated with boredom—are already extinct in the cities and are declining in the country as well. With this the gift for listening is lost and the community of listeners disappears. For storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this art is lost when the stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving and spinning to go on while they are being listened to. The more self-forgetful the listener is, the more deeply is what he listens to impressed upon his memory. When the rhythm of work has seized him, he listens to the tales in such a way that the gift of retelling them comes to him all by itself. This, then, is the nature of the web in which the gift of storytelling is cradled. This is how today it is becoming unraveled at all its ends after being woven thousands of years ago in the ambience of the oldest forms of craftsmanship.

IX

The storytelling that thrives for a long time in the milieu of work—the rural, the maritime, and the urban—is itself an artisan form of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel. Storytellers tend to begin their story with a presentation of the circumstances in which they themselves have learned what is to follow, unless they simply pass it off as their own experience. Leskov begins his "Deception" with the description of a train trip on which he supposedly heard from a fellow passenger the events which he then goes on to relate; or he thinks of Dostoevsky's funeral, where he sets his acquaintance with the heroine of his story "À Propos of the Kreutzer Sonata"; or he evokes a gathering of a reading circle in which we are told the events that he reproduces for us in his "Interesting Men." Thus his tracks are frequently evident in his narratives, if not as those of the one who experienced it, then as those of the one who reports it.

This craftsmanship, storytelling, was actually regarded as a craft by Leskov himself. "Writing," he says in one of his letters, "is to me no liberal

art, but a craft." It cannot come as a surprise that he felt bonds with craftsmanship, but faced industrial technology as a stranger. Tolstoy, who must have understood this, occasionally touches this nerve of Leskov's storytelling talent when he calls him the first man "who pointed out the inadequacy of economic progress. . . . It is strange that Dostoevsky is so widely read. . . . But I simply cannot comprehend why Leskov is not read. He is a truthful writer." In his artful and high-spirited story "The Steel Flea," which is midway between legend and farce, Leskov glorifies native craftsmanship through the silversmiths of Tula. Their masterpiece, the steel flea, is seen by Peter the Great and convinces him that the Russians need not be ashamed before the English.

The intellectual picture of the atmosphere of craftsmanship from which the storyteller comes has perhaps never been sketched in such a significant way as by Paul Valéry. "He speaks of the perfect things in nature, flawless pearls, full-bodied, matured wines, truly developed creatures, and calls them 'the precious product of a long chain of causes similar to one another.'" The accumulation of such causes has its temporal limit only at perfection. "This patient process of Nature," Valéry continues, "was once imitated by men. Miniatures, ivory carvings, elaborated to the point of greatest perfection, stones that are perfect in polish and engraving, lacquer work or paintings in which a series of thin, transparent layers are placed one on top of the other—all these products of sustained, sacrificing effort are vanishing, and the time is past in which time did not matter. Modern man no longer works at what cannot be abbreviated."

In point of fact, he has succeeded in abbreviating even storytelling. We have witnessed the evolution of the "short story," which has removed itself from oral tradition and no longer permits that slow piling one on top of the other of thin, transparent layers which constitutes the most appropriate picture of the way in which the perfect narrative is revealed through the layers of a variety of retellings.

X

Valéry concludes his observations with this sentence: "It is almost as if the decline of the idea of eternity coincided with the increasing aversion to sustained effort." The idea of eternity has ever had its strongest source in death. If this idea declines, so we reason, the face of death must have changed. It turns out that this change is identical with the one that has diminished the communicability of experience to the same extent as the art of storytelling has declined.

It has been observable for a number of centuries how in the general consciousness the thought of death has declined in omnipresence and vividness. In its last stages this process is accelerated. And in the course of the nineteenth century bourgeois society has, by means of hygienic and social, private and public institutions, realized a secondary effect which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to make it possible for people to avoid the sight of the dying. Dying was once a public process in the life of the individual and a most exemplary one; think of the medieval pictures in which the deathbed has turned into a throne toward which the people press through the wide-open

doors of the death house. In the course of modern times dying has been pushed further and further out of the perceptual world of the living. There used to be no house, hardly a room, in which someone had not once died. (The Middle Ages also felt spatially what makes that inscription on a sun dial of Ibiza, *Ultima multis* [the last day for many], significant as the temper of the times.) Today people live in rooms that have never been touched by death, dry dwellers of eternity, and when their end approaches they are stowed away in sanatoria or hospitals by their heirs. It is, however, characteristic that not only a man's knowledge or wisdom, but above all his real life—and this is the stuff that stories are made of—first assumes transmissible form at the moment of his death. Just as a sequence of images is set in motion inside a man as his life comes to an end—unfolding the views of himself under which he has encountered himself without being aware of it—suddenly in his expressions and looks the unforgettable emerges and imparts to everything that concerned him that authority which even the poorest wretch in dying possesses for the living around him. This authority is at the very source of the story.

XI

Death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death. In other words, it is natural history to which his stories refer back. This is expressed in exemplary form in one of the most beautiful stories we have by the incomparable Johann Peter Hebel. It is found in the *Schatzkästlein des rheinischen Hausfreundes,* is entitled "Unexpected Reunion," and begins with the betrothal of a young lad who works in the mines of Falun. On the eve of his wedding he dies a miner's death at the bottom of his tunnel. His bride keeps faith with him after his death, and she lives long enough to become a wizened old woman; one day a body is brought up from the abandoned tunnel which, saturated with iron vitriol, has escaped decay, and she recognizes her betrothed. After this reunion she too is called away by death. When Hebel, in the course of this story, was confronted with the necessity of making this long period of years graphic, he did so in the following sentences: "In the meantime the city of Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, and the Seven Years' War came and went, and Emperor Francis I died, and the Jesuit Order was abolished, and Poland was partitioned, and Empress Maria Theresa died, and Struensee was executed. America became independent, and the united French and Spanish forces were unable to capture Gibraltar. The Turks locked up General Stein in the Veteraner Cave in Hungary, and Emperor Joseph died also. King Gustavus of Sweden conquered Russian Finland, and the French Revolution and the long war began, and Emperor Leopold II went to his grave too. Napoleon captured Prussia, and the English bombarded Copenhagen, and the peasants sowed and harvested. The millers ground, the smiths hammered, and the miners dug for veins of ore in their underground workshops. But when in 1809 the miners at Falun. . . . "

Never has a storyteller embedded his report deeper in natural history than Hebel manages to do in this chronology. Read it carefully. Death appears in it with the same regularity as the Reaper does in the processions that pass around the cathedral clock at noon.

XII

Any examination of a given epic form is concerned with the relationship of this form to historiography. In fact, one may go even further and raise the question whether historiography does not constitute the common ground of all forms of the epic. Then written history would be in the same relationship to the epic forms as white light is to the colors of the spectrum. However this may be, among all forms of the epic there is not one whose incidence in the pure, colorless light of written history is more certain than the chronicle. And in the broad spectrum of the chronicle the ways in which a story can be told are graduated like shadings of one and the same color. The chronicler is the history-teller. If we think back to the passage from Hebel, which has the tone of a chronicle throughout, it will take no effort to gauge the difference between the writer of history, the historian, and the teller of it, the chronicler. The historian is bound to explain in one way or another the happenings with which he deals; under no circumstances can he content himself with displaying them as models of the course of the world. But this is precisely what the chronicler does, especially in his classical representatives, the chroniclers of the Middle Ages, the precursors of the historians of today. By basing their historical tales on a divine plan of salvation—an inscrutable one—they have from the very start lifted the burden of demonstrable explanation from their own shoulders. Its place is taken by interpretation, which is not concerned with an accurate concatenation of definite events, but with the way these are embedded in the great inscrutable course of the world.

Whether this course is eschatologically determined or is a natural one makes no difference. In the storyteller the chronicler is preserved in changed form, secularized, as it were. Leskov is among those whose work displays this with particular clarity. Both the chronicler with his eschatological orientation and the storyteller with his profane outlook are so represented in his works that in a number of his stories it can hardly be decided whether the web in which they appear is the golden fabric of a religious view of the course of things, or the multicolored fabric of a worldly view.

Consider the story "The Alexandrite," which transports the reader into "that old time when the stones in the womb of the earth and the planets at celestial heights were still concerned with the fate of men, and not today when both in the heavens and beneath the earth everything has grown indifferent to the fates of the sons of men and no voice speaks to them from anywhere, let alone does their bidding. None of the undiscovered planets play any part in horoscopes any more, and there are a lot of new stones, all measured and weighed and examined for their specific weight and their density, but they no longer proclaim anything to us, nor do they bring us any benefit. Their time for speaking with men is past."

As is evident, it is hardly possible unambiguously to characterize the course of the world that is illustrated in this story of Leskov's. Is it determined eschatologically or naturalistically? The only certain thing is that in its very nature it is by definition outside all real historical categories. Leskov tells us that the epoch in which man could believe himself to be in harmony with

nature has expired. Schiller called this epoch in the history of the world the period of naïve poetry. The storyteller keeps faith with it, and his eyes do not stray from that dial in front of which there moves the procession of creatures of which, depending on circumstances, Death is either the leader or the last wretched straggler.

XIII

It has seldom been realized that the listener's naïve relationship to the storyteller is controlled by his interest in retaining what he is told. The cardinal point for the unaffected listener is to assure himself of the possibility of reproducing the story. Memory is the epic faculty *par excellence.* Only by virtue of a comprehensive memory can epic writing absorb the course of events on the one hand and, with the passing of these, make its peace with the power of death on the other. It is not surprising that to a simple man of the people, such as Leskov once invented, the Czar, the head of the sphere in which his stories take place, has the most encyclopedic memory at his command. "Our Emperor," he says, "and his entire family have indeed a most astonishing memory."

Mnemosyne, the rememberer, was the Muse of the epic art among the Greeks. This name takes the observer back to a parting of the ways in world history. For if the record kept by memory—historiography—constitutes the creative matrix of the various epic forms (as great prose is the creative matrix of the various metrical forms), its oldest form, the epic, by virtue of being a kind of common denominator includes the story and the novel. When in the course of centuries the novel began to emerge from the womb of the epic, it turned out that in the novel the element of the epic mind that is derived from the Muse—that is, memory—manifests itself in a form quite different from the way it manifests itself in the story.

Memory creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation. It is the Muse-derived element of the epic art in a broader sense and encompasses its varieties. In the first place among these is the one practiced by the storyteller. It starts the web which all stories together form in the end. One ties on to the next, as the great storytellers, particularly the Oriental ones, have always readily shown. In each of them there is a Scheherazade who thinks of a fresh story whenever her tale comes to a stop. This is epic remembrance and the Muse-inspired element of the narrative. But this should be set against another principle, also a Muse-derived element in a narrower sense, which as an element of the novel in its earliest form—that is, in the epic—lies concealed, still undifferentiated from the similarly derived element of the story. It can, at any rate, occasionally be divined in the epics, particularly at moments of solemnity in the Homeric epics, as in the invocations to the Muse at their beginning. What announces itself in these passages is the perpetuating remembrance of the novelist as contrasted with the short-lived reminiscences of the storyteller. The first is dedicated to *one* hero, *one* odyssey, *one* battle; the second, to *many* diffuse occurrences. It is, in other words, *remembrance* which, as the Muse-derived element of the novel, is

added to reminiscence, the corresponding element of the story, the unity of their origin in memory having disappeared with the decline of the epic.

XIV

"No one," Pascal once said, "dies so poor that he does not leave something behind." Surely it is the same with memories too—although these do not always find an heir. The novelist takes charge of this bequest, and seldom without profound melancholy. For what Arnold Bennett says about a dead woman in one of his novels—that she had had almost nothing in the way of real life—is usually true of the sum total of the estate which the novelist administers. Regarding this aspect of the matter we owe the most important elucidation to Georg Lukács, who sees in the novel "the form of transcendental homelessness." According to Lukács, the novel is at the same time the only art form which includes time among its constitutive principles.

"Time," he says in his *Theory of the Novel,* "can become constitutive only when connection with the transcendental home has been lost. Only in the novel are meaning and life, and thus the essential and the temporal, separated; one can almost say that the whole inner action of a novel is nothing else but a struggle against the power of time. . . . And from this . . . arise the genuinely epic experiences of time: hope and memory. . . . Only in the novel . . . does there occur a creative memory which transfixes the object and transforms it. . . . The duality of inwardness and outside world can here be overcome for the subject 'only' when he sees the . . . unity of his entire life . . . out of the past life-stream which is compressed in memory. . . . The insight which grasps this unity . . . becomes the divinatory-intuitive grasping of the unattained and therefore inexpressible meaning of life."

The "meaning of life" is really the center about which the novel moves. But the quest for it is no more than the initial expression of perplexity with which its reader sees himself living this written life. Here "meaning of life"—there "moral of the story": with these slogans novel and story confront each other, and from them the totally different historical co-ordinates of these art forms may be discerned. If *Don Quixote* is the earliest perfect specimen of the novel, its latest exemplar is perhaps the *Éducation sentimentale.*

In the final words of the last-named novel, the meaning which the bourgeois age found in its behavior at the beginning of its decline has settled like sediment in the cup of life. Frédéric and Deslauriers, the boyhood friends, think back to their youthful friendship. This little incident then occurred: one day they showed up in the bordello of their home town, stealthily and timidly, doing nothing but presenting the *patronne* with a bouquet of flowers which they had picked in their own gardens. "This story was still discussed three years later. And now they told it to each other in detail, each supplementing the recollection of the other. 'That may have been,' said Frédéric when they had finished, 'the finest thing in our lives.' 'Yes, you may be right,' said Deslauriers, 'that was perhaps the finest thing in our lives.'"

With such an insight the novel reaches an end which is more proper to it, in a stricter sense, than to any story. Actually there is no story for which the

question as to how it continued would not be legitimate. The novelist, on the other hand, cannot hope to take the smallest step beyond that limit at which he invites the reader to a divinatory realization of the meaning of life by writing "Finis."

XV

A man listening to a story is in the company of the storyteller; even a man reading one shares this companionship. The reader of a novel, however, is isolated, more so than any other reader. (For even the reader of a poem is ready to utter the words, for the benefit of the listener.) In this solitude of his, the reader of a novel seizes upon his material more jealously than anyone else. He is ready to make it completely his own, to devour it, as it were. Indeed, he destroys, he swallows up the material as the fire devours logs in the fireplace. The suspense which permeates the novel is very much like the draft which stimulates the flame in the fireplace and enlivens its play.

It is a dry material on which the burning interest of the reader feeds. "A man who dies at the age of thirty-five," said Moritz Heimann once, "is at every point of his life a man who dies at the age of thirty-five." Nothing is more dubious than this sentence—but for the sole reason that the tense is wrong. A man—so says the truth that was meant here—who died at thirty-five will appear to *remembrance* at every point in his life as a man who dies at the age of thirty-five. In other words, the statement that makes no sense for real life becomes indisputable for remembered life. The nature of the character in a novel cannot be presented any better than is done in this statement, which says that the "meaning" of his life is revealed only in his death. But the reader of a novel actually does look for human beings from whom he derives the "meaning of life." Therefore he must, no matter what, know in advance that he will share their experience of death: if need be their figurative death—the end of the novel—but preferably their actual one. How do the characters make him understand that death is already waiting for them—a very definite death and at a very definite place? That is the question which feeds the reader's consuming interest in the events of the novel.

The novel is significant, therefore, not because it presents someone else's fate to us, perhaps didactically, but because this stranger's fate by virtue of the flame which consumes it yields us the warmth which we never draw from our own fate. What draws the reader to the novel is the hope of warming his shivering life with a death he reads about.

XVI

"Leskov," writes Gorky, "is the writer most deeply rooted in the people and is completely untouched by any foreign influences." A great storyteller will always be rooted in the people, primarily in a milieu of craftsmen. But just as this includes the rural, the maritime, and the urban elements in the many stages of their economic and technical development, there are many gradations in the concepts in which their store of experience comes down to us. (To say nothing of the by no means insignificant share which traders had in the art of storytelling; their task was less to increase its didactic content than to

refine the tricks with which the attention of the listener was captured. They have left deep traces in the narrative cycle of *The Arabian Nights.*) In short, despite the primary role which storytelling plays in the household of humanity, the concepts through which the yield of the stories may be garnered are manifold. What may most readily be put in religious terms in Leskov seems almost automatically to fall into place in the pedagogical perspectives of the Enlightenment in Hebel, appears as hermetic tradition in Poe, finds a last refuge in Kipling in the life of British seamen and colonial soldiers. All great storytellers have in common the freedom with which they move up and down the rungs of their experience as on a ladder. A ladder extending downward to the interior of the earth and disappearing into the clouds is the image for a collective experience to which even the deepest shock of every individual experience, death, constitutes no impediment or barrier.

"And they lived happily ever after," says the fairy tale. The fairy tale, which to this day is the first tutor of children because it was once the first tutor of mankind, secretly lives on in the story. The first true storyteller is, and will continue to be, the teller of fairy tales. Whenever good counsel was at a premium, the fairy tale had it, and where the need was greatest, its aid was nearest. This need was the need created by the myth. The fairy tale tells us of the earliest arrangements that mankind made to shake off the nightmare which the myth had placed upon its chest. In the figure of the fool it shows us how mankind "acts dumb" toward the myth; in the figure of the youngest brother it shows us how one's chances increase as the mythical primitive times are left behind; in the figure of the man who sets out to learn what fear is it shows us that the things we are afraid of can be seen through; in the figure of the wiseacre it shows us that the questions posed by the myth are simple-minded, like the riddle of the Sphinx; in the shape of the animals which come to the aid of the child in the fairy tale it shows that nature not only is subservient to the myth, but much prefers to be aligned with man. The wisest thing—so the fairy tale taught mankind in olden times, and teaches children to this day—is to meet the forces of the mythical world with cunning and with high spirits. (This is how the fairy tale polarizes *Mut,* courage, dividing it dialectically into *Untermut,* that is, cunning, and *Übermut,* high spirits.) The liberating magic which the fairy tale has at its disposal does not bring nature into play in a mythical way, but points to its complicity with liberated man. A mature man feels this complicity only occasionally, that is, when he is happy; but the child first meets it in fairy tales, and it makes him happy.

XVII

Few storytellers have displayed so profound a kinship with the spirit of the fairy tale as did Leskov. This involves tendencies that were promoted by the dogmas of the Greek Orthodox Church. As is well known, Origen's speculation about *apokatastasis*—the entry of all souls into Paradise—which was rejected by the Roman Church plays a significant part in these dogmas. Leskov was very much influenced by Origen and planned to translate his work *On First Principles.* In keeping with Russian folk belief he interpreted the Resurrection less as a transfiguration than as a disenchantment, in a sense akin to

the fairy tale. Such an interpretation of Origen is at the bottom of "The Enchanted Pilgrim." In this, as in many other tales by Leskov, a hybrid between fairy tale and legend is involved, not unlike that hybrid which Ernst Bloch mentions in a connection in which he utilizes our distinction between myth and fairy tale in his fashion.

"A hybrid between fairy tale and legend," he says, "contains figuratively mythical elements, mythical elements whose effect is certainly captivating and static, and yet not outside man. In the legend there are Taoist figures, especially very old ones, which are 'mythical' in this sense. For instance, the couple Philemon and Baucis: magically escaped though in natural repose. And surely there is a similar relationship between fairy tale and legend in the Taoist climate of Gotthelf, which, to be sure, is on a much lower level. At certain points it divorces the legend from the locality of the spell, rescues the flame of life, the specifically human flame of life, calmly burning, within as without."

"Magically escaped" are the beings that lead the procession of Leskov's creations: the righteous ones. Pavlin, Figura, the toupee artiste, the bear keeper, the helpful sentry—all of them embodiments of wisdom, kindness, comfort the world, crowd about the storyteller. They are unmistakably suffused with the *imago* of his mother.

This is how Leskov describes her: "She was so thoroughly good that she was not capable of harming any man, nor even an animal. She ate neither meat nor fish, because she had such pity for living creatures. Sometimes my father used to reproach her with this. But she answered: 'I have raised the little animals myself, they are like my children to me. I can't eat my own children, can I?' She would not eat meat at a neighbor's house either. 'I have seen them alive,' she would say; 'they are my acquaintances. I can't eat my acquaintances, can I?'"

The righteous man is the advocate for created things and at the same time he is their highest embodiment. In Leskov he has a maternal touch which is occasionally intensified into the mythical (and thus, to be sure, endangers the purity of the fairy tale). Typical of this is the protagonist of his story "Kotin the Provider and Platonida." This figure, a peasant named Pisonski, is a hermaphrodite. For twelve years his mother raised him as a girl. His male and female organs mature simultaneously, and his bisexuality "becomes the symbol of God incarnate."

In Leskov's view, the pinnacle of creation has been attained with this, and at the same time he presumably sees it as a bridge established between this world and the other. For these earthily powerful, maternal male figures which again and again claim Leskov's skill as a storyteller have been removed from obedience to the sexual drive in the bloom of their strength. They do not, however, really embody an ascetic ideal; rather, the continence of these righteous men has so little privative character that it becomes the elemental counterpoise to uncontrolled lust which the storyteller has personified in *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk.* If the range between a Pavlin and this merchant's wife covers the breadth of the world of created beings, in the hierarchy of his characters Leskov has no less plumbed its depth.

XVIII

The hierarchy of the world of created things, which has its apex in the righteous man, reaches down into the abyss of the inanimate by many gradations. In this connection one particular has to be noted. This whole created world speaks not so much with the human voice as with what could be called "the voice of Nature" in the title of one of Leskov's most significant stories.

This story deals with the petty official Philip Philipovich who leaves no stone unturned to get the chance to have as his house guest a field marshal passing through his little town. He manages to do so. The guest, who is at first surprised at the clerk's urgent invitation, gradually comes to believe that he recognizes in him someone he must have met previously. But who is he? He cannot remember. The strange thing is that the host, for his part, is not willing to reveal his identity. Instead, he puts off the high personage from day to day, saying that the "voice of Nature" will not fail to speak distinctly to him one day. This goes on until finally the guest, shortly before continuing on his journey, must grant the host's public request to let the "voice of Nature" resound. Thereupon the host's wife withdraws. She "returned with a big, brightly polished, copper hunting horn which she gave to her husband. He took the horn, put it to his lips, and was at the same instant as though transformed. Hardly had he inflated his cheeks and produced a tone as powerful as the rolling of thunder when the field marshal cried: 'Stop, I've got it now, brother. This makes me recognize you at once! You are the bugler from the regiment of jaegers, and because you were so honest I sent you to keep an eye on a crooked supplies supervisor.' 'That's it, Your Excellency,' answered the host. 'I didn't want to remind you of this myself, but wanted to let the voice of Nature speak.'"

The way the profundity of this story is hidden beneath its silliness conveys an idea of Leskov's magnificent humor. This humor is confirmed in the same story in an even more cryptic way. We have heard that because of his honesty the official was assigned to watch a crooked supplies supervisor. This is what we are told at the end, in the recognition scene. At the very beginning of the story, however, we learn the following about the host: "All the inhabitants of the town were acquainted with the man, and they knew that he did not hold a high office, for he was neither a state official nor a military man, but a little supervisor at the tiny supply depot, where together with the rats he chewed on the state rusks and boot soles, and in the course of time had chewed himself together a nice little frame house." It is evident that this story reflects the traditional sympathy which storytellers have for rascals and crooks. All the literature of farce bears witness to it. Nor is it denied on the heights of art; of all Hebel's characters, the Brassenheim Miller, Tinder Frieder, and Red Dieter have been his most faithful companions. And yet for Hebel, too, the righteous man has the main role in the *theatrum mundi.* But because no one is actually up to this role, it keeps changing hands. Now it is the tramp, now the haggling Jewish peddler, now the man of limited intelligence who steps in to play this part. In every single case it is a guest performance, a moral improvisation.

Hebel is a casuist. He will not for anything take a stand with any principle, but he does not reject it either, for any principle can at some time become the instrument of the righteous man. Compare this with Leskov's attitude. "I realize," he writes in his story "À Propos of the Kreutzer Sonata," "that my thinking is based much more on a practical view of life than on abstract philosophy or lofty morality; but I am nevertheless used to thinking the way I do." To be sure, the moral catastrophes that appear in Leskov's world are to the moral incidents in Hebel's world as the great, silent flowing of the Volga is to the babbling, rushing little millstream. Among Leskov's historical tales there are several in which passions are at work as destructively as the wrath of Achilles or the hatred of Hagen. It is astonishing how fearfully the world can darken for this author and with what majesty evil can raise its scepter. Leskov has evidently known moods—and this is probably one of the few characteristics he shares with Dostoevsky—in which he was close to antinomian ethics. The elemental natures in his *Tales from Olden Times* go to the limit in their ruthless passion. But it is precisely the mystics who have been inclined to see this limit as the point at which utter depravity turns into saintliness.

XIX

The lower Leskov descends on the scale of created things the more obviously does his way of viewing things approach the mystical. Actually, as will be shown, there is much evidence that in this, too, a characteristic is revealed which is inherent in the nature of the storyteller. To be sure, only a few have ventured into the depths of inanimate nature, and in modern narrative literature there is not much in which the voice of the anonymous storyteller, who was prior to all literature, resounds so clearly as it does in Leskov's story "The Alexandrite." It deals with a semi-precious stone, the chrysoberyl. The mineral is the lowest stratum of created things. For the storyteller, however, it is directly joined to the highest. To him it is granted to see in this chrysoberyl a natural prophecy of petrified, lifeless nature concerning the historical world in which he himself lives. This world is the world of Alexander II. The storyteller—or rather, the man to whom he attributes his own knowledge—is a gem engraver named Wenzel who has achieved the greatest conceivable skill in his art. One can juxtapose him with the silversmiths of Tula and say that—in the spirit of Leskov—the perfect artisan has access to the innermost chamber of the realm of created things. He is an incarnation of the devout. We are told of this gem cutter: "He suddenly squeezed my hand on which was the ring with the alexandrite, which is known to sparkle red in artificial light, and cried: 'Look, here it is, the prophetic Russian stone! O crafty Siberian. It was always green as hope and only toward evening was it suffused with blood. It was that way from the beginning of the world, but it concealed itself for a long time, lay hidden in the earth, and permitted itself to be found only on the day when Czar Alexander was declared of age, when a great sorcerer had come to Siberia to find the stone, a magician . . . ' 'What nonsense are you talking,' I interrupted him; 'this stone wasn't found by a magician at all, it was a scholar named Nordenskjöld!' 'A magician! I tell you, a magician!' screamed Wenzel in a loud voice. 'Just look; what a stone! A green morning is in it and a bloody

evening . . . This is fate, the fate of noble Czar Alexander!' With these words old Wenzel turned to the wall, propped his head on his elbows, and . . . began to sob."

One can hardly come any closer to the meaning of this significant story than by some words which Paul Valéry wrote in a very remote context. "Artistic observation," he says in reflections on a woman artist whose work consisted in the silk embroidery of figures, "can attain an almost mystical depth. The objects on which it falls lose their names. Light and shade form very particular systems, present very individual questions which depend upon no knowledge and are derived from no practice, but get their existence and value exclusively from a certain accord of the soul, the eye, and the hand of someone who was born to perceive them and evoke them in his own inner self."

With these words, soul, eye, and hand are brought into connection. Interacting with one another, they determine a practice. We are no longer familiar with this practice. The role of the hand in production has become more modest, and the place it filled in storytelling lies waste. (After all, storytelling, in its sensory aspect, is by no means a job for the voice alone. Rather, in genuine storytelling the hand plays a part which supports what is expressed in a hundred ways with its gestures trained by work.) That old co-ordination of the soul, the eye, and the hand which emerges in Valéry's words is that of the artisan which we encounter wherever the art of storytelling is at home. In fact, one can go on and ask oneself whether the relationship of the storyteller to his material, human life, is not in itself a craftsman's relationship, whether it is not his very task to fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful, and unique way. It is a kind of procedure which may perhaps most adequately be exemplified by the proverb if one thinks of it as an ideogram of a story. A proverb, one might say, is a ruin which stands on the site of an old story and in which a moral twines about a happening like ivy around a wall.

Seen in this way, the storyteller joins the ranks of the teachers and sages. He has counsel—not for a few situations, as the proverb does, but for many, like the sage. For it is granted to him to reach back to a whole lifetime (a life, incidentally, that comprises not only his own experience but no little of the experience of others; what the storyteller knows from hearsay is added to his own). His gift is the ability to relate his life; his distinction, to be able to tell his entire life. The storyteller: he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story. This is the basis of the incomparable aura about the storyteller, in Leskov as in Hauff, in Poe as in Stevenson. The storyteller is the figure in which the righteous man encounters himself.

7

Claude Lévi-Strauss

From

The Savage Mind

In inquiring into the nature of mythical thought Boas came to the conclusion in 1914 that the "essential problem" was to know why "human tales are preferably attached to animals, celestial bodies, and other personified phenomena of nature" (Boas, "Mythology and Folk-tales," p. 490). This problem is in fact the last remnant of the speculations about totemism but it seems possible to solve it.

I have already tried to show that the heterogeneous beliefs and customs arbitrarily collected together under the heading of totemism do not rest on the idea of a relationship of substance between one or more social groups and one or more natural domains. They are allied to other beliefs and practices, directly or indirectly linked to classificatory schemes which allow the natural and social universe to be grasped as an organized whole. The only distinctions which could be introduced between all these schemes derive from preferences, which are never exclusive, for this or that level of classification.

All the levels of classification in fact have a common characteristic: whichever, in the society under consideration, is put first it must authorize—or even imply—possible recourse to other levels, formally analogous to the favored one and differing from it only in their relative position within a whole system of reference which operates by means of a pair of contrasts: between general and particular on the one hand, and nature and culture on the other.

The mistake which the upholders of totemism made was arbitrarily to isolate one level of classification, namely that constituted by reference to natural species, and to give it the status of an institution, when like all levels of classification it is in fact only one among others and there is no reason to regard it as more important than, say, the level operating by means of abstract categories or that using nominal classes. What is significant is not so much the presence—or absence—of this or that level of classification as the existence of a classification with, as it were, an adjustable thread which gives the group adopting it the means of "focusing" on all planes, from the most abstract to the most concrete, the most cultural to the most natural, without changing its intellectual instrument.

. . . .

As we have just seen, the practico-theoretical logics governing the life and thought of so-called primitive societies are shaped by the insistence on differentiation. The latter is already evident in the myths underlying totemic insti-

tutions (Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism,* pp. 27–8 and 36–7) and it is also found on the plane of technical activity, which aspires to results bearing the hallmark of permanence and discontinuity. Now, on the theoretical as well as the practical plane, the existence of differentiating features is of much greater importance than their content. Once in evidence, they form a system which can be employed as a grid is used to decipher a text, whose original unintelligibility gives it the appearance of an uninterrupted flow. The grid makes it possible to introduce divisions and contrasts, in other words the formal conditions necessary for a significant message to be conveyed. The imaginary example discussed in the last chapter showed how any system of differentiating features, provided that it is a system, permits the organization of a sociological field which historical and demographic evolution are transforming and which is hence composed of a theoretically unlimited series of different contents.

The logical principle is always to be *able* to oppose terms which previous impoverishment of the empirical totality, provided it has been impoverished allows one to conceive as distinct. *How* to oppose is an important but secondary consideration in relation to this first requirement. In other words, the operative value of the systems of naming and classifying commonly called totemic derives from their formal character: they are codes suitable for conveying messages which can be transposed into other codes, and for expressing messages received by means of different codes in terms of their own system. The mistake of classical ethnologists was to try to reify this form and to tie it to a determinate content when in fact what it provides is a method for assimilating any kind of content. Far from being an autonomous institution definable by its intrinsic characteristic, totemism, or what is referred to as such, corresponds to certain modalities arbitrarily isolated from a formal system, the function of which is to guarantee the convertibility of ideas between different levels of social reality. As Durkheim seems sometimes to have realized, the basis of sociology is what may be called "socio-logic" (Lévi-Strauss, *Leçon inaugurale,* p. 36; p. 137).

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I have drawn attention elsewhere to a feature of so-called totemic institutions which in my own view is fundamental to them. The homology they evoke is not between social groups and natural species but between the differences which manifest themselves on the level of groups on the one hand and on that of species on the other. They are thus based on the postulate of a homology between *two systems of differences,* one of which occurs in nature and the other in culture. Indicating relations of homology by vertical lines, a "pure totemic structure" could thus be represented in the following way:

NATURE:	species 1	≠	species 2	≠	species 3	≠	. . . . . species *n*
		|		|		|	
CULTURE:	group 1	≠	group 2	≠	group 3	≠	. . . . . group *n*

This structure would be fundamentally impaired if homologies between the terms themselves were added to those between their relations or if, going one

step further, the entire system of homologies were transferred from relations to terms:

NATURE:	species 1	$\neq$	species 2	$\neq$	species 3	.....	species *n*
	|		|		|		
CULTURE:	group 1	$\neq$	group 2	$\neq$	group 3	.....	group *n*

In this case the implicit content of the structure would no longer be that clan 1 differs from clan 2 as for instance the eagle differs from the bear but rather that clan 1 is like the eagle and clan 2 like the bear. In other words, the nature of clan 1 and the nature of clan 2 would each be involved separately instead of the formal relation between them.

Now, the transformation whose theoretical possibility has just been considered can sometimes be directly observed. The islanders of the Torres Straits have totemic clans, numbering about thirty at Mabuiag. These exogamous patrilineal clans were grouped into two moieties, one comprising terrestrial and the other marine animals. At Tutu and Saibai this division seems to have corresponded to a territorial division within the village. The structure was already in an advanced state of decay at the time of Haddon's expedition. Nevertheless, the natives had a very strong sense of the physical and psychological affinity between men and their totems and of the corresponding obligation of each group to pursue the appropriate type of behavior. Thus the Cassowary, Crocodile, Snake, Shark and Hammer-headed Shark clans were said to love fighting and the Shovel-nosed Skate, Ray and Sucker-Fish clans to be peace loving. The Dog clan was held to be unpredictable, dogs being of a changeable disposition. The members of the Crocodile clan were thought to be strong and ruthless and those of the Cassowary clan to have long legs and to run fast (Frazer, vol. II, pp. 3–9, quoting Haddon and Rivers). It would be interesting to know whether these beliefs are survivals from the old organization or whether they developed as the exogamous rules decayed.

The fact is that similar, though not equally developed, beliefs have been observed among the Menomini of the Great Lakes and among the Chippewa further north. Among the latter, people of the Fish clan were reputed to be long-lived, frequently to go bald or to have thin hair, and all bald people were assumed to come from this clan. Peoples of the Bear clan, on the other hand, had long, thick, coarse hair which never went white and they were said to be ill-tempered and fond of fighting. People of the Crane clan had loud ringing voices and provided the tribe with its orators (Kinietz, pp. 76–7).

Let us pause for a moment to consider the theoretical implications of views like these. When nature and culture are thought of as two systems of differences between which there is a formal analogy, it is the systematic character of each domain which is brought to the fore. Social groups are distinguished from one another but they retain their solidarity as parts of the same whole, and the rule of exogamy furnishes the means of resolving this opposition balanced between diversity and unity. But if social groups are considered not so much from the point of view of their reciprocal relations in social life as each on their own account, in relation to something other than sociological

reality, then the idea of diversity is likely to prevail over that of unity. Each social group will tend to form a system no longer with other social groups but with particular differentiating properties regarded as hereditary, and these characteristics exclusive to each group will weaken the framework of their solidarity within the society. The more each group tries to define itself by the image which it draws from a natural model, the more difficult will it become for it to maintain its links with other social groups and, in particular to exchange its sisters and daughters with them since it will tend to think of them as being of a particular "species." Two images, one social and the other natural, and each articulated separately, will be replaced by a socio-natural image, single but fragmented:[1]

NATURE:	species 1	species 2	species 3	species *n*
CULTURE:	group 1	group 2	group 3	group *n*

It is of course only for purposes of exposition and because they form the subject of this book that I am apparently giving a sort of priority to ideology and superstructures. I do not at all mean to suggest that ideological transformations give rise to social ones. Only the reverse is in fact true. Men's conception of the relations between nature and culture is a function of modifications of their own social relations. But, since my aim here is to outline a theory of superstructures, reasons of method require that they should be singled out for attention and that major phenomena which have no place in this program should seem to be left in brackets or given second place. We are however merely studying the shadows on the wall of the Cave without forgetting that it is only the attention we give them which lends them a semblance of reality.

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This enables us to understand the appearance of a permanent conflict between the structural nature of the classification and the statistical nature of its demographic basis. The classification tends to be dismantled like a palace swept away upon the flood, whose parts, through the effect of currents and stagnant waters, obstacles and straits, come to be combined in a manner other than that intended by the architect. In totemism, therefore, function inevitably triumphs over structure. The problem it has never ceased presenting to theorists is that of the relation between structure and event. And the great lesson of totemism is that the form of the structure can sometimes survive when the structure itself succumbs to events.

There is thus a sort of fundamental antipathy between history and systems of classification. This perhaps explains what one is tempted to call the "totemic void," for in the bounds of the great civilizations of Europe and Asia there is a remarkable absence of anything which might have reference to totemism, even in the form of remains. The reason is surely that the latter have elected to explain themselves by history and that this undertaking is incompatible with that of classifying things and beings (natural and social) by means of finite groups. Totemic classifications no doubt divide their groups into an

original and a derivative series: the former contains zoological and botanical species in their supernatural aspect, the latter human groups in their cultural aspect, and the former is asserted to have existed before the latter, having in some sort engendered it. The original series, however, lives on in diachrony through animal and plant species, alongside the human series.

The two series exist in time but under an atemporal regime, since, being both real, they sail through time together, remaining such as they were at the moment of separation. The original series is always there, ready to serve as a system of reference for the interpretation and rectification of the changes taking place in the derivative series. In theory, if not in practice, history is subordinated to system.

When, however, a society sides with history, classification into finite groups becomes impossible because the derivative series, instead of reproducing the original series, merges with it to form a single series in which each term is derivative in relation to the one preceding it and original in relation to the one coming after it. Instead of a once-for-all homology between two series each finite and discontinuous in its own right, a continuous evolution is postulated within a single series that accepts an unlimited number of terms.

Some Polynesian mythologies are at the critical point where diachrony irrevocably prevails over synchrony, making it impossible to interpret the human order as a fixed projection of the natural order by which it is engendered; it is prolongation, rather than a reflection, of the natural order:

> Fire and water married, and from them sprung the earth, rocks, trees, and everything. The cuttle-fish fought with the fire and was beaten. The fire fought with the rocks, and the rocks conquered. The large stones fought with the small ones; the small ones conquered. The small stones fought with the grass, and the grass conquered. The trees fought with the creepers, the trees were beaten and the creepers conquered. The creepers rotted, swarmed with maggots, and from maggots they grew to be men. (Turner, pp. 6–7)

This evolutionism precludes any synthesis of a totemic type, for things and natural beings do not afford the static model of a likewise static diversity between human groups: they are ordered as the genesis of a humanity whose advent they prepare. But this incompatibility in turn raises a problem, namely: how, if it exists, do classificatory systems succeed in eliminating history or, when that is impossible, integrating it?

I have suggested elsewhere that the clumsy distinction between "peoples without history" and others could with advantage be replaced by a distinction between what for convenience I called "cold" and "hot" societies: the former seeking, by the institutions they give themselves, to annul the possible effects of historical factors on their equilibrium and continuity in a quasi-automatic fashion; the latter resolutely internalizing the historical process and making it the moving power of their development (Charbonnier, pp. 35–47; Lévi-Strauss, *Leçon inaugurale,* pp. 41–3). Several types of historical sequences will still need to be distinguished. Some, while existing in duration, are of a recurrent nature; the annual cycle of the seasons, for instance, or that of individual life or that of exchanges of goods and services within the social group. These

sequences raise no problem because they are periodically repeated in duration without their structure necessarily undergoing any change; the object of "cold" societies is to make it the case that the order of temporal succession should have as little influence as possible on their content. No doubt they do not succeed perfectly; but this is the norm they set themselves. Apart from the fact that the procedures they employ are more efficacious than some contemporary ethnologists (Vogt) are willing to admit, the real question is not what genuine results they obtain but rather by what lasting purpose they are guided, for their image of themselves is an essential part of their reality.

It is tedious as well as useless, in this connection, to amass arguments to prove that all societies are in history and change: that this is so is patent. But in getting embroiled in a superfluous demonstration, there is a risk of overlooking the fact that human societies react to this common condition in very different fashions. Some accept it, with good or ill grace, and its consequences (to themselves and other societies) assume immense proportions through their attention to it. Others (which we call primitive for this reason) want to deny it and try, with a dexterity we underestimate, to make the states of their development which they consider "prior" as permanent as possible. It is not sufficient, in order that they should succeed, that their institutions should exercise a regulating action on the recurrent sequences by limiting the incidence of demographic factors, smoothing down antagonisms which manifest themselves within the group or between groups and perpetuating the framework in which individual and collective activities take place.[2] It is also necessary that these non-recurrent chains of events whose effects accumulate to produce economic and social upheavals, should be broken as soon as they form, or that the society should have an effective procedure to prevent their formation. We are acquainted with this procedure, which consists not in denying the historical process but in admitting it as a form without content. There is indeed a before and an after, but their sole significance lies in reflecting each other.

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From The Origin of Table Manners

I DO NOT MEAN to assert that the lists of animals given in the myths always, and in all circumstances, conceal a hidden principle of organization. But, in this particular instance, they bear a formal resemblance to those used to describe the daily evolution of the moon's phases, which throughout the whole of South America are so often associated with separate creatures. . . . The analogy gives weight to Goeje's remark that "there is something reminiscent of the zodiac in these stories" . . . ; this is all the more true in that the Guiana Indians believe each constellation to be a spirit which reigns over one particular species of game. Yet I hesitate to follow the Dutch scholar, when he includes in the same group the famous myth about Poronominaré (M_{247}),[3] in which the organization of the animal kingdom by a lunar divinity occupies a predominant place, as it does in the myths of the Salish of North-West America, which are very similar in several respects in spite of their geographical remoteness. Poronominaré is a "coureur des bois," who systematically goes in search of adventures instead of being subjected to them after losing his way. He drives forward, whereas characters like Cimidyuë wander at random in their search for the road back home, and only very exceptionally in these myths are the absurd encounters with weird animals expressive of any positive contribution to the natural order. The relation suggested by Goeje exists perhaps between the two types, but only if their respective themes are transformed along a different axis from the one I have chosen to deal with. Also, to reduce these myths merely to a zodiacal formula reflecting the annual course of certain constellations would be to disregard their intrinsic originality. It is probably true that, in native thought, each animal species is associated with a constellation whose rising or culmination heralds the hunting, fishing, or breeding season. But in this instance, we are dealing with a succession of animals which make their appearance within a relatively short space of time and at the ideal rate of one per night. At the same time, the behavior attributed to them ceases to have any concrete zoological reference. In a masquerade, reminiscent for us of the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, they mingle with imaginary beings such as the rolling head, the man with the sharpened leg or long testicles, the demons who walk backward and the talking excrement. All of these turn up unexpectedly in the narrative, detached from their relevant mythic paradigms, without which they become impossible to interpret. What is more important, the animals themselves make disconcerting statements or behave in a disconcerting manner: the huge toad in the shelter of whose body Wirai (M_{403b}) tries to sleep, spends the night waking him up and asking him to lie down under some other part. Perisuát (M_{402}), stretched out at the foot of a tree, cannot sleep because a bird nesting on the other side of the tree rails all night about misbehaving adolescents. Other birds (M_{402}, M_{60}) assume the form of a

cosy hut, and conjure up or dispel the mirage at will. A monkey, who is also a man and a jaguar (M_{60}), vigorously hammers away at his own nose. . . .

I have no desire to suggest that these mythic themes, by their very nature, defy any attempt at interpretation. Even those with which we are already familiar and which here take on the appearance of quotations or *collages* through being removed from their original context, must be connected with the most surprising by links which structural analysis could probably elucidate, if it modified its angle of approach. But, to achieve such a result, it would be necessary to take into account other dimensions of the myth: it would be essential to have a better knowledge of the aspects of the astronomical code and, going beyond the story, to study the narrative style, the syntax, the vocabulary, and perhaps the phonology. The transcriptions that would be necessary for this purpose are not available, and in any case the task would be beyond my competence. However, I should like to make it clear that the inability to proceed further is relative to the particular approach which, with intent no less than by necessity, I have chosen to adopt, and it does not exclude the possibility of using another interpretative technique along different lines. Moreover, even though I am obliged to recognize a certain freedom of invention in these myths, I can at least demonstrate the necessity of this freedom with the help of the tools I normally use.

After a long series of transformations, the theoretical point of departure of which was to be found in myths about the origin of certain constellations (although I did in fact begin by considering an intermediary type illustrated by M_{354}), I succeeded in isolating the set M_{60}, M_{317}, $M_{402–404}$. From these constellations I moved on to others, then to the logical symbols of constellations without any actual existence (this was the case in M_{354}), and finally to the sun and the moon. In the myths, this progression is accompanied by another occurring in the same order and moving from the notion of a long—annual or seasonal—periodicity to a short, monthly or daily, periodicity, the two kinds being in opposition to each other in the same way as the constellations are opposed to the moon, and forming polarities between which, for reasons I have already described, the sun occupies an intermediary position and exercises an ambiguous function. Now something irreversible occurs as the same narrative substance is being subjected to this series of operations: like laundry being twisted and retwisted by the washerwoman to wring out the water, the mythic substance allows its internal principles of organization to seep away. Its structural content is diminished. Whereas at the beginning the transformations were vigorous, by the end they have become quite feeble. The phenomenon was already apparent in the transition from the real to the symbolic, and then to the imaginary . . . , and it is now manifest in two further ways: the sociological, astronomical and anatomical codes, which before functioned visibly, are now reduced to a state of latency; and the structure deteriorates into seriality. The deterioration begins when oppositional structures give way to reduplicatory structures: the successive episodes all follow the same pattern. And the deterioration ends at the point where reduplication replaces structure. Being itself no more than the form of a form, it echoes the last murmur of

expiring structure. The myth, having nothing more to say, or very little, can only continue by dint of self-repetition.

But, at the same time, it becomes more extended, for two reasons. In the first place, there is no reason why episodes unconnected by any internal logic should not accommodate other additional episodes of the same type, theoretically ad infinitum. The myth therefore appropriates elements from other myths which are all the more easily separable from their sources in that they themselves belong to very rich paradigmatic sets, whose underlying coherence is often concealed by their complexity. Then—and this is a more important point—the need to fill increasingly short episodic periods makes it necessary to extend the myth, as it were, from within. Each period requires its own particular little story, and the diminished contrast with other stories of the same type nevertheless generates a differential feature, which serves to signify that story.

This being so, it is understandable why these exotic narratives should be so strongly reminiscent of a genre no less widespread than their own, but associated with the powerful technical resources and popular demands of industrial society; I am referring to the serial story, the *roman-feuilleton.* Here, too, is a literary genre which draws its inferior substance from better models, and becomes poorer the further it moves away from the originals. In the myths, as in the *roman-feuilleton,* creation proceeds by imitations which gradually distort the nature of the source. But there is more to it than that: the analogous construction of the episodic myth and the *roman-feuilleton* results from their respective subservience to very short forms of periodicity. The difference is that, in the one case, the short periodicity arises from the nature of the signified and that, in the other, it is imposed from without as a practical requirement of the signifier: the visible moon, by its apparent movement, and the popular press, by its circulation, are subject to daily periodicity and, in the case of any story, the same formal constraints apply to the need to signify the one or to be signified by the other.

However, it would be wrong to forget that although the paths of the episodic myth and the *roman-feuilleton* may intersect, myth and serial story move along their courses in opposite directions. The *roman-feuilleton,* the ultimate and debased state of the novel as a literary genre, links up with the lowest forms of myth, which are themselves a first attempt at fictional creativeness in its pristine freshness and originality. With its "happy ending," which rewards the good and punishes the wicked, the *roman-feuilleton* achieves a rough equivalent of the closed structure of the myth, transposed on to the caricatural level of a moral order with which a society caught up in history believes it can replace the logico-natural order it has abandoned, or which has abandoned it. But the stories we have just been considering depart from the mythic paradigm in that they do not really finish: the story they tell is not a closed one. It begins with an accident, continues with a series of discouraging and inconclusive adventures and ends without the initial deficiency having been remedied, since the hero's return solves nothing; having been indelibly marked by his arduous journey through the forest, he becomes the murderer of his partner or his pet animals, and is himself either doomed to an incomprehensible death

or reduced to a state of wretchedness. It is, then, as if the myth's message reflected the dialectical process that had produced it, and which is an irreversible decline from structure to repetition. The hero's reduced destiny expresses, in terms of content, the modalities of a form.

Is this not precisely what constitutes the novel? The past, life and the dream carry along with them dislocated images and forms, by which the writer is haunted when chance or some other necessity, contradicting the necessity by which they were once engendered in the actual order of reality, preserves in them, or rediscovers in them, the contours of myth. Yet the novelist drifts at random among these floating fragments that the warmth of history has, as it were, melted off from the ice-pack. He collects these scattered elements and re-uses them as they come along, being at the same time dimly aware that they originate from some other structure, and that they will become increasingly rare as he is carried along by a current different from the one which was holding them together. The *dénouement* or "fall" of the plot,[4] which from the very beginning was internal to its development, and has recently become external to it—since we are now witnessing the fall or collapse *of* the plot, after the "fall" *within* the plot—confirms that because of the novel's historical position in the evolution of literary genres, it was inevitable that it should tell a story that ends badly, and that it should now, as a genre, be itself coming to a bad end. In either case, the hero of the novel is the novel itself. It tells its own story, saying not only that it was born from the exhaustion of myth, but also that it is nothing more than an exhausting pursuit of structure, always lagging behind an evolutionary process that it keeps the closest watch on, without being able to rediscover, either within or without, the secret of a forgotten freshness, except perhaps in a few havens of refuge where—contrary to what happens in the novel—mythic creation still remains vigorous, but unconsciously so.

How Myths Die[5]

WE WILL BE CONCERNED here with the death of myths, not in time, but in space. We know that myths transform themselves. These transformations—from one variant to another of the same myth, from one myth to another, from one society to another for the same myth or for different myths—bear sometimes on the framework, sometimes on the code, sometimes on the message of the myth, but without its ceasing to exist as such. Thus these transformations respect a sort of principle of conservation of mythical material, by which any myth could always come from another myth.

However, the integrity of the original formula may itself deteriorate in the course of this process. This formula degenerates or evolves, as you will, beyond the stage where the distinctive characteristics of the myth are still recognizable and where the myth retains what a musician might call its "lilt." In such cases, what does the myth become? This is what we now propose to examine with an example.

The peoples of the Salish linguistic family, together with their Sahaptin neighbors to the South, occupied in historical times an area stretching almost without a break from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, and roughly covering the basins of the Columbia River in the south and the Frazer River in the north. In this vast territory numerous variants were collected of a complex of myths organized around the tale of a poor, sick, and despised old man, usually called Lynx. By a trick, he makes the daughter of the village chief pregnant. People wonder at this unexplainable pregnancy. A child is born, who points out Lynx as its father; the indignant villagers abandon the couple without fire or food. By himself, or with his wife's help, Lynx recovers his true nature, that of a beautiful young man and expert hunter. Thanks to him, his family lives in plenty, while the villagers who have gone away are starving. At last, they resign themselves to coming back and they ask his forgiveness. Those who did not persist in too harshly maltreating and trying to disfigure the hero are forgiven and receive food supplies (Boas, "Indianische Sagen," pp. 9–10; *Folk-Tales,* pp. 109–116; Phinney pp. 465–488; Jacobs, pp. 27–30; Adamson, pp. 193–195; Reichard, pp. 109–116; Teit, *Traditions,* pp. 36–40; *Shuswap,* p. 684; Ray, "Sanpoil," pp. 138–142; Hoffman, pp. 28–29; Haeberlin, pp. 414–417; Hill-Tout, *Notes,* pp. 534–540; *Natives,* pp. 228–242).

Reduced to its essential outline, the myth is widely diffused, since one meets with it as far as tropical America, among the ancient Tupinamba of the east coast of Brazil, and also in Peru. The originality of the Salish is to have developed it in two parallel forms. In one, Lynx's son, kidnapped by an owl, then freed by his people, puts on the sanious skin of an old man; when burned, this skin will give birth to fog. In the other, a child, adventurous or out of favor (depending on the version), becomes master of the wind which in those days laid waste to the earth. Having captured and tamed it, he then exposes himself to dangers from which he escapes with the help of a character named Coyote.

The fact that this second form has liberally borrowed from old French folklore disseminated in the eighteenth century by Canadian *coureurs-des-bois,* presents a problem which we have tried to solve elsewhere . . . and which must not affect us here. In order to illustrate the symmetry of the two forms, it will suffice to point out that in the beliefs of the region we are dealing with (and beyond, as far as the eastern Pueblo), lynx and coyote constitute a pair of terms in correlation and opposition. This is also the case for fog and wind, to the origin of which each series of myths is, respectively, linked. They are two types of atmospheric phenomena, but one is exclusive of the other.

Moreover, the heroes of each series, the son of Lynx or the protégé of Coyote, reproduce characters (with whom sometimes they are even identified) bearing very similar names: Tsaauz, Ntsaâz, Snánaz, depending on the dialect, and among whom the native informants see as being related (Boas, *Folk-Tales,* p. 26). But even when the boy kidnapped by the owl is not the son of Lynx, he retains a metaphorical affinity with him. Both are master of the fog, and at different points in the narrative each camouflages himself in the ulcerated skin of an old man. Whereas the relation between them is one of resemblance, in the symmetrical series a relation of contiguity prevails between Coyote and the young hero master of wind: their collaboration is the result of a simple meeting. Finally, the first hero's capture by an owl is echoed back by the name of the second hero. He is called Snánaz which means "owl" in Shuswap, according to the informants (Teit, *Shuswap,* pp. 698–699, 702–707; *Traditions,* pp. 63–64, 87–89; *Mythology,* pp. 265–268, 393–394; Boas, *Folk-Tales,* pp. 26–30; Hill-Tout, "Ethnological Reports," pp. 347–352; Reichard, p. 146; Farrand, pp. 36–37, 42–43).

It is among the Thompson River Indians, who occupy a central position within the Salish linguistic area, that the two series are met with in their most articulate form. Already, the whole has been allowed to disintegrate among their Shuswap neighbors to the north, also Salish-speaking. According to J. Teit, who was the great expert on these Indians, they commonly divided their version of the myth of Snánaz, master of wind, into two separate stories. As for the symmetrical myth, about the whimpering unbearable little boy, threatened by the owl, then kidnapped by him, it fades out and tends toward what we could call a minimal expression. This process is quantitative first, as the plot is reduced to the kidnapping of the hero, his subsequent deliverance, and the transformation of the owl-man into an ordinary bird, the harbinger of death (a function attributed to the owl by all the interior Salish and many other Indians). It is also qualitative (for instance among the Kutenai, an isolated linguistic group immediately to the east of the Salish; Boas and Hunt, pp. 20, 37, 50) in that the owl of the Shuswap myth is turned from an ogre into a wise and powerful magician who, far from reducing the young hero to bondage, transmits his knowledge to him and makes him even superior to himself.

Consequently, in following the same myth from the south to the north, we first observe a diminishing which affects the length and richness of the narrative, on the one hand, and the dramatic intensity of the motifs on the other, as though the plot were collapsing and contracting at the same time.

The Shuswap, both by language and culture the northernmost of the interior Salish, still show a marked affinity with their neighbors to the south. But if we pursue the investigation beyond them, we cross over a double threshold. In the northwest, the Shuswap lived next to the Chilcotin, the first representatives of the great Athapascan linguistic family, which spread continuously to the north and the northwest up to the Eskimo territories. From the cultural point of view, the Chilcotin had moved away from the amorphous sociological model, typical of the interior Salish, and had drawn nearer to the neighboring native cultures on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. These cultures, including those of the Kwakiutl, Bella Coola, and Tsimshian, were characterized as we know by a complex social organization with division into clans and phratries; by a class system distinguishing between nobles, common people, and slaves, founded on birth, primogeniture and wealth; and finally, by a prodigious flowering of graphic and plastic arts, of which the richly sculptured totem poles and ceremonial masks are the best known examples.

These linguistic and cultural characteristics are proof of the different historical pasts of the Salish, who apparently occupied the same territory for several thousand years, and the more recently arrived Athapascan. The threshold formed by the northern frontier of the Salish area must have presented an appreciable obstacle to communication. One often observes, in this type of case, that mythological systems, after passing through a minimal expression, recover their original fullness on the other side of the threshold. But their reflection is inverted, a bit like a bundle of light rays entering into a *camera obscura* through a pin-point opening and forced by this obstacle to cross over each other. The same image, seen rightside-up outside, is reflected upside-down in the camera. . . . True to this model, the Chilcotin version of the myth about the boy kidnapped by an owl reinstates as rich and developed a plot as the one existing among the Salish groups south of the Shuswap. But, significantly, several essential propositions topple over and undergo transformations which sometimes result in the meaning being turned inside out.

So how do the Chilcotin tell the myth? They say that, under the pretext of feeding him, an owl enticed and kidnapped a little boy who cried without stopping. He brought him up, made him grow very fast through magic operations, and adorned him with a shell (*dentalia*) necklace. The parents set out to look for their son and meet him. But the child, who liked living with the owl, first refused to follow them. Finally he was convinced and the small group left hurriedly after burning the owl's hut. The bird-man pursued the fugitives who hid near a footbridge that he had to pass on. Frightened by the hero who was waving about his hooked fingers (he had armed them with goat's horns which gave him dangerous claws), the owl fell into the water, swam ashore and gave up the chase. The village received the hero with open arms. He appeared adorned from head to foot with the shells he had taken away, and distributed them around. Since then, the Indians have ornaments made of *dentalia.*

One day, the hero's mother found him dirty and ordered him to take a bath. He refused and she forced him. He dove into the water and disappeared. The sorrowing mother remained on the lake shore and refused to move from there. Winter came. The village women came to the lake to make holes in the

ice and draw water. The hero, still living in the depths, amused himself by breaking the pails. Two sisters caught him, using as bait an elaborately decorated pail. He was so softened up and weakened by his stay in the water that he could no longer walk. The sisters tried in vain to scrape off the mud with which he was covered and which gave him a sort of second skin. They carried him to their hut where he warmed up by the fire, and they took care of him.

That winter was unusually severe. The food supplies became scarce and the men could not get the wood they needed to make snowshoes and go hunting. Although a convalescent, the hero dragged himself outside, gathered just enough wood for one pair of snowshoes, and asked a woman to bring the wood inside and shake it when she was halfway down the ladder leading into the hut (which, among these Indians, is partly underground and entered through the roof). Shaken that way, the wood multiplied and filled the hut. The hunters could make snowshoes and go out. But they found no game, and famine set in.

Then the hero asked the village people to give him arrows, and he too went hunting. He took off his silt skin in secret and hid it. In his original appearance, he killed many caribou and—once more covered with silt—distributed them among the people who had given him good arrows. But Raven had given him a weak arrow and received as his share only a coyote, which is poor game. So he spied on the hero and found the silt skin caught in the fork of a tree. Raven hid it. He saw the hero return young, beautiful, adorned with shells. Unmasked, the hero remained as he was and married the two sisters who had cured him (Farrand, pp. 36–37).

To make apparent all the transformations or inversions which appear in this Athapascan version of a myth more widely known among the Salish, it would no doubt be desirable to quote other variants. But this would lead us too far afield, and so we will resign ourselves to proceeding by allusion. Instead of the usual sequence of the owl going into the hut to kidnap the child, he lures him outside. The Shuswap version, summarized above, had already proceeded to transform the owl, cannibalistic monster for the Kutenai, into a benefactor. The Chilcotin account pursues the transformation in the same direction. But it reverses the function of the bird-man, who among the Shuswap grants spiritual powers, and who becomes the custodian of material wealth (*dentalia*) which the hero gets hold of before running away. It is to this event that the myth traces back the origin of these jewels, thus attributing both an exotic and supernatural character to them. The Chilcotin had good reasons for fostering the mystery in relation to the minds of the Interior Salish, their inland neighbors, who could only obtain these shells by their intermediary (indeed they call the Chilcotin by a name which means "People of the *Dentalia*"). But the reality was quite different. The Chilcotin were the only ones able to communicate with the Bella Coola, through the passes in the coastal ranges situated in their territory, and they bought the shells from these fishermen. Thus they held a veritable monopoly as regards to the plateau Salish. The latter, especially the Thompson and the Coeur d'Alêne, explained how they lost the origin (formerly a local one) of the *dentalia* shells through a series of myths symmetrical to the one under discussion. This puts their myth in

diametrical opposition to that by which the Chilcotin claim to explain how they acquired the exotic source of these ornaments.

No less revealing is the episode in the Chilcotin myth in which the hero's mother wants to force him to bathe. If we list all the variants of this episode along a southeast-northwest axis, on which the Coeur d'Alêne, the Thompson and the Chilcotin follow one another, we can in fact observe a triple transformation. In the Coeur d'Alêne version, the thirsty mother asks her son for some water, which he refuses her. In the Thompson version, the son, feeling the heat, takes a bath in spite of his mother's forbidding it, which is the opposite of the Chilcotin episode (Reichard, pp. 169–170; Boas, *Folk-Tales,* pp. 26–30; Teit, *Mythology,* pp. 265–268). Therefore the semantic function of water ranges from drink to bath, i.e., from body content to body recipient, for drinking water goes into the body just as the body goes into the bath water. At the same time, the negative son reverses to the negative mother, who is in turn inverted to positive mother:

	COEUR D'ALÊNE	THOMPSON	CHILCOTIN
Water	content	recipient	recipient
Protagonists	son (−)	mother (−)	mother (+)

All the versions include the winter sequence, but whereas in the interior Salish versions the villagers lack firewood, in the Chilcotin version they start by lacking water, which the hero prevents the women from drawing when he amuses himself by breaking their pails. No doubt the wood plays a role in this version, but as lumber, thus in opposition to the other function wood may fill in feeding the fire. Furthermore, this opposition is redoubled by the manner, different in each case, in which the hero makes a small quantity of wood multiply: shaken halfway down the ladder or dumped directly from the top to the bottom. This latter method—the only one remembered in the Salish versions—certainly alludes to that used by the character called Lynx, of whom we spoke at the beginning of this chapter, to make the chief's daughter pregnant (by spitting or urinating from the top of the ladder on the young woman sleeping at the foot of it). All the more certainly that, in some of these versions, the boy captured by the owl is the son of Lynx and that, in the Chilcotin's myth where he is not his son, he still puts on a silt skin which makes him weak and sick, exactly like Lynx wearing the ulcerated skin of an old man; and Lynx's son who, barely freed from his captivity by the owl, voluntarily adopts the same dress. Remember that this skin, stolen from the hero and burned, gives rise to fog, in perfect symmetry with the silt which makes water opaque as fog makes the air opaque, and whose aquatic affinity is the counterpart of the affinity conceived between fog, smoke, and fire in the Salish myths.

Finally, the relation with the mythical series in which the hero makes himself master of wind—faintly attested among the Chilcotin—results from the appearance of coyote in a reverse position in the other myth: as poor game, the passive instrument of the hero's revenge against the raven who did not help him. In the strong versions about the origin of the mastered wind, we

saw that the coyote actively provides aid for the hero, enabling him to escape from a perilous situation.

A PRIORI, nothing seems to prevent the myth from passing other thresholds, beyond the Chilcotin. This passage would be marked by a contraction and an attenuation of the plot, beyond which the original image would be recovered and differently inverted along a new axis. But it is also conceivable that in crossing successive thresholds, the creative momentum may lessen and the semantic field of transformations, easily exploitable at first, may afford a diminishing return. Becoming less and less plausible as they beget one another, the last states of the system would impose such distortions to the mythical framework, putting so much stress on its resistance, that it would end up by disintegrating. Then the myth would cease to exist as such. Either it would vanish, making way for other myths, typical of other cultures or regions; or, in order to survive, it would undergo alterations affecting not only its form, but the very essence of myth.

We believe that this can be observed in the particular case under consideration. North of the Chilcotin lived the Carrier, also members of the Athapascan linguistic family but very different in their culture. Indeed the Carrier owed their name to their distinctive customs. Widows were subjected to particularly rigorous constraints, like the duty of constantly wearing the bones of their dead husbands for a prolonged period of time. Now we rediscover among them the generative cell of our mythological ensemble such as it existed, in the south, among the Sahaptin and the Salish, but singularly transformed. The Carrier tell the story of a poor orphan boy whose whole wardrobe consisted of a lynx fur. In the course of a walk, he came upon the chief's daughter naked. She did not see him at all, but later recognized him by the contact of his rough hands which had grazed her body. To escape dishonor, she married him. The chief graciously accepted this son-in-law, hardly worthy of him, bestowing gifts of clothing and ornaments on him, and thereby "washing" his poverty off. He was well advised to do so, as the young man turned out to be an expert hunter and killer of the monsters who persecuted the Indians. One day, however, he died tackling a gigantic man-killing lynx. His disconsolate wife killed herself over her husband's body (Jenness, pp. 114–121).

When this account is compared with the story of Lynx as we summarized it at the beginning according to the Sahaptin and Salish versions, several types of changes are observed. Some appear as inversions. Instead of being old, the hero is young; he sees the chief's daughter outside the village and not inside (or very near) the hut. Moreover, everything transpires as if the Carrier version systematically replaced literal expressions with their metaphorical equivalents. A garment made of lynx fur characterizes a protagonist named Lynx elsewhere; symbolic contact with the young woman's body replaces her actual impregnation. There is a no less symbolic correlation of poverty ("washed" off the hero by the chief's presents) with the silt skin of the Chilcotin version, which the two sisters try in vain to wash off; and with the ulcerated skin of an old man in the Salish versions in which the hero, after getting rid of it, appears adorned with the riches he already owned. Finally, instead of a story inspired

by the concept of a distributive justice and ending with the separation of the protagonists in two camps—the wicked who are punished, the good who are forgiven—we have here a plot evolving to a tragic and inescapable end. These features all show that, with the Carrier version, a decisive passage occurs from a formula mythical until then to a romantic formula within which the initial myth (which was—do not forget—the "story of Lynx") appears as its own metaphor: the monstrous lynx looming up without motivation at the end, and castigating, not so much the hero adorned with all the virtues, as the narrative itself for having forgotten or failed to recognize its original nature and disowning itself as a myth.

Let us now consider another threshold: that which separated the Athapascan of the interior from the tribes of the Pacific coast on their northwest, whose social and cultural characteristics we evoked briefly [above], and to which we should add the linguistic ones. Established at the mouth of the Nass and the Skeena Rivers, the Tsimshian, who speak a separate language and were perhaps related to the great Penutian family, were divided into clans bearing animal names. The Bear clan of the Nisqa subtribe justified, by a legend, its exclusive title to the wearing of a ceremonial headdress of carved and painted wood, inlaid with abalone shell and portraying the face of an owl surrounded by little manlike figures with claws. They tell how a chief had a young son who cried incessantly. He was threatened with the owl, who indeed appeared. But instead of kidnapping the insufferable little boy, the owl flew off with his sister, whom he planted at the top of a tree, from which no one could get her down in spite of her complaints. At last, she resigned herself, stopped lamenting, and married the owl. She soon gave birth to a son and when he had grown up, she asked her husband's permission to send him back among men. The owl agreed to this, composed a song for the occasion, and carved a headdress in his image. He took his wife and son to their village. After the mother had certified the identity of her son for her people, she went back with her husband, leaving the child who later bequeathed to his clan of origin the headdress carved by the owl and the song he had taught him: "O my brother! White Owl gave me this tree as my seat."

To make the discussion simpler, we will leave aside the character of the sister. Her presence in the plot is in fact explained by a transformation, the reason and origin of which must be sought in the Salish versions found in the Frazer, especially among the Stseelis or the Chehalis which this is not the place to examine here (Hill-Tout, "Ethnological Reports," pp. 347–352).

Let us be content to show how this Tsimshian version differs from those of the Chilcotin and the interior Salish. Whereas the Carrier referred to these latter versions by a play of metaphors, it is clear that the Tsimshian narrative, exclusively, brings into play relations of contiguity. In particular, it does not present itself as a myth, but as a legend relating supposedly historical events and meant to fill a precise and restricted purpose, that is the founding of certain clan privileges. And yet, it is without question the same myth because the carved headdress, published by Boas (*Social Organization,* pp. 324–325 and plate 1; *Fifth Report,* p. 572), represents characters thrusting hands with threat-

ening claws toward the owl they have surrounded. This is a motif which the Tsimshian legend, as collected by Boas, does not explain, but of which the informants were nevertheless knowledgeable, since they called these characters "claw men," who are mentioned in the Chilcotin myth we summarized [above].

But, from there, one can go back much further. These claws made of goat's horns, by means of which the Chilcotin hero caused the owl's downfall, transform the basket bristling with awls on the inside, where the Shuswap and the Kutenai owls deposited the hero after kidnapping him. These awls in turn transform the vermin, the owl's food, which line the basket in the more southern Salish versions in which the kidnapper bird has the role of a loathsome master and not an ogre (Kutenai version) or a shaman presiding over initiation tests (Shuswap version). At the end of this regressive process, we rediscover among the Sanpoil, who lived in the southeast part of the Salish area (thus at the opposite end from the Tsimshian), an implicit reference to the central theme of their narrative and the ritual song that goes with it. Indeed, the Sanpoil called the fork in the central pole of their huts, used for dances in honor of guardian spirits, the "owl's perch" (Ray, *Cultural Relations,* p. 129).

Thus, a myth of Salish origin is first inverted as a myth when it passes the linguistic and cultural threshold separating the Salish from the Athapascan; it then becomes a romantic tale when it passes from the Chilcotin to the Carrier. When passing another threshold, it undergoes a different transformation, this time to the order of legendary tradition, as a means of founding certain modalities of an ancestral system. In one case, it swings toward the novel, and in the other toward what is certainly not history but has some pretensions to it.

To finish this survey, let us turn to the east, the geographical direction opposite to that of the Tsimshian. This will enable us to perceive a third type of transformation, beyond the cultural and linguistic threshold separating the Athapascan from the tribes of the great Algonkin linguistic family stretching to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. Its westernmost representatives in the north were the Cree, adjacent to the Athapascan. About the year 1880, the people of the Poule-d'Eau lake region related that there was in olden times a village where a child mysteriously disappeared every night. In another corner of the village lived a little boy who cried and wept all the time. One day, his mother, annoyed, shook him roughly. The child slipped out of his skin "like a butterfly coming out of its chrysalis" and flew away in the shape of a big white owl.

The woman watched for her son's return and discovered that it was he who, changed into an owl at night, stole the other children to eat them, and who reassumed his human appearance at daybreak. She brought the villagers together and accused this son, whom she had conceived with a white man. The little ogre was condemned to death, but he pleaded with his fellow villagers and promised great wonders in return for his life. Finally, he was locked up alive, with some food supplies, in a wooden box propped on stakes, and the whole population moved away.

When the people came back three years later, they were astounded to see on the deserted site a large village of wooden houses, inhabited by white men

whose language the Indians did not understand. It was a trading post. The owl-child lived there. They recognized him and questioned him. He explained that these new people were born of the children he had kidnapped and devoured. "But he, having become a great white chief, gave them Cree weapons, clothes, implements. And, from then on, the two peoples lived very harmoniously" (Petitot, pp. 462–465).

It is a fact that the Cree—so named as an abbreviation of Kristineaux (from Kenistenoa, one of the names by which they called themselves)—appeared as early as 1640 in the Jesuits' reports; and that, very early, they established friendly relations with the French and the English. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, they already served the fur trade as hunters and guides, and their subsequent history remains closely associated with that of the Hudson Bay Company and of the Northwest Fur Company. Their version of the myth of the child kidnapped by an owl obviously results from a manipulation meant to make the myth fit an aspect of their history by which the Cree differed from their neighbors, who were more reserved or even hostile to the whites.

But we also see that we are not dealing with the same type of story as the one the Tsimshian legend referred to, at the price of another manipulation of the myth. Not only because it is tribal in one case and clannish in the other, but for more profound reasons. The Tsimshian were trying to justify an order they wished to retain unchanged by a tradition the origin of which they dismissed as lost in the dawn of time. The Cree adapted the same myth to recent history, with the manifest intention of justifying a development in the making and of validating one of its possible orientations—collaboration with the white man—among others left open to them. The story of the Tsimshian legend is imaginary, because no woman ever married an owl. That of the Cree myth refers to real events, because the white men did marry Indian women and the Indians had visited a trading post for the first time. At the time when the myth was collected, their friendly relations with the white men still were part of their actual experience.

Thus, a myth which is transformed in passing from tribe to tribe finally exhausts itself—without disappearing, for all of that. Two paths still remain open: that of fictional elaboration, and that of reactivation with a view to legitimizing history. This history, in its turn, may be of two types: retrospective, to found a traditional order on a distant past, or prospective, to make this past the beginning of a future which is starting to take shape. By emphasizing with an example this organic contiguity apparent among mythology, legendary tradition, and what we must call politics, we wish to pay tribute to a scholar and philosopher who has never consented to make history a privileged domain in which man would be sure of finding his truth.

From The Naked Man

It is obvious . . . that there is a dissymmetry [between music and mythology] because, unlike music which borrows only the sound element from natural language, myth needs the whole of language to express itself. The comparison I have just suggested only remains valid if we see each myth as a score, which, for its performance, requires language to serve as orchestra, unlike music, the means of realization of which are the singing voice (produced in physiological conditions totally different from those required for speech) and instruments.

It cannot be claimed, then, that myth is as completely free from language as music, since it remains involved with it. However, its relative detachment expresses itself, in the mythic narrative, by attempts to recapture sound, attempts comparable to the impulse that leads the listener to try to give sense to a musical work. The myth is attracted towards sense, as if by a magnet: and this partial adhesion creates a potential void with regard to sound that the narrator feels the need to fill by various devices, such as vocal effects or gestures which diversify, modulate and reinforce his speech. Sometimes he chants or intones the myth, sometimes he declaims it; and his recitation is almost always accompanied by stereotyped formulae and gestures. In addition, he imagines the scenes vividly, and he knows how to make them equally present to his listeners: he sees them as if they were happening there and then, he relives them and communicates his experience with appropriate mimicry and gesticulation. It can even happen that the myth is recited by several voices and thus becomes a theatrical performance. The defective relationship to sound is thus compensated for by a redundancy of verbal formulae, repetitions, *da capo*s and refrains. Alliterations and paronomasia produce a wealth of assonance and recurrent verbal sounds which excite the ear, as the meaning invested in music by the listener excites his intellect. Something remains, then, of the disparity recognized at the beginning of this paragraph, in spite of the reestablishment of symmetry at the cost, however, of an inner torsion. In music, the coalescence of a global metaphorical significance around the work makes up for the missing aspect, whereas the myth reintroduces sound by metonymical means. In the one case, the sense restored to music corresponds to *the totality* of the sound; in the other, sound is added as *part* of the sense.

Symmetry exists, however, but it assumes a more complex form than I allowed at first, so as to simplify the argument. As has just been said, in myth something of the sound persists in the sense and cannot be expelled from it, if only in so far as the language in which the myth is narrated loses much of its specific relevance in relation to the sense, which survives when entrusted to different linguistic vehicles. In music, on the contrary, the sense is outside the sound and cannot be reintegrated into it, unless Baudelaire is right when he says ("Wagner," pp. 1210–14) that music is a common form into which an unlimited series of significant contents can be fitted according to the personal-

ity of the listeners. Consequently, myth, a sense-system, adapts to the unlimited series of linguistic vehicles used by successive narrators, in the same ways as music, a sound-system, adapts to the unlimited series of semantic charges that its successive listeners care to put into it. In the last resort, the reason for this parallelism lies in the fact that the signifying function of the myth is exercised not within language but above it (Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale,* p. 232): the contingent language of each narrator is always good enough to transmit a system of meanings evolved by metalinguistic processes and whose operational value remains more or less constant from one language to another. Symmetrically, the signifying function of music proves irreducible to any part of it that might be expressed or translated in verbal form. It operates below language, and no discourse whatever, not even that of the most inspired commentator, could ever be profound enough to make it applicable.

To me, at any rate, it appears certain—since I embarked on this *Introduction to the Science of Mythology* in full consciousness of the fact that I was trying, in a different form and in an area accessible to me, to make up for my congenital inability to compose a musical work—that I have tried to construct with meanings a composition comparable to those that music creates with sounds: it is the negative of a symphony of which, some day, some composer could well try to produce the positive image; I leave it to others to decide whether the demands that music has already made on my work can be said to prefigure such an image.

The adherence of structure to sense, which is characteristic of mythology, is clearly demonstrated by the specific constraints it imposes on the quadripartite groups I discussed on several occasions in Volume Three (*Origin,* pp. 356–8, 382, 403, 420). We saw then that myths or variants of myths were arranged like Klein groups including a theme, the contrary of the theme and their opposites. This gave sets of interlocking four-term structures, retaining a relationship of homology with each other. These were, in the instances examined and following the order in which the interlocking took place: 1) non-sister, misbehaving sister, sister-instructress, wife; 2) return of spring, separation of the seasons, end of summer, conflict of the seasons; 3) wounded man, lame woman, hunchbacked man, menstruating woman; 4) sap, resin, urine, menstrual blood. But we also saw that these groups were not independent of each other, that none was self-sufficient as an entity in its own right, as it would appear to be if it could be envisaged from a purely formal angle. Actually, the ordered series of the variants does not return to the initial term after running through the first cycle of four: as through an effect of slippage, or more accurately through an action comparable to that of the gear-change of a bicycle, the logical chain is jolted loose and engages with the initial term of the immediately following interlocking group, and the process is repeated right through to the end. The variant-producing cycle thus takes on the appearance of a spiral, whose progressive narrowing disregards the objective discontinuity of the interlocking levels. This is tantamount to saying that, in the case of myth, the periodic distribution of the group structures becomes inseparable from the semantic levels that the analysis brings to light. Unlike mathematics,

myth subordinates structure to a meaning, of which it becomes the immediate expression: as on a television screen, when we say it is out of order, but only because the parameters of reception are being altered through contingent reasons instead of being governed by a law, we are dealing in all cases with images which are inverted from positive to negative or are reversed from right to left or from top to bottom; all of which transformations are similar to the mechanism of the pun which, when properly used, causes a word of a sentence to display, as if in the manner of a negative, *the other meaning* that the same word or sentence might take on, if transposed into a different logical context.

Transformations of this kind constitute the basis of all semiology. If, as I wrote some time ago, meaning is the operator of the reorganization of a set (Lévi-Strauss, *Pensée,* p. 30), it follows that the search for the meaning, for the meaning hidden behind the meaning and so on, is limited only by what we might call—broadening a concept invented by Saussure—"the anagrammatic capacity" of the signifying set. It is well known that Saussure himself did not carry his discovery through to its conclusion, because of a difficulty he came up against and that he was unable, or lacked the will, to overcome: if anagrams play an essential part in the poetics of the most ancient literatures, how is it that rhetoricians and poets themselves never mentioned them or gave any sign that they were conscious of using such a device? The generalization I am proposing might perhaps supply an answer. If such anagrams represent a particular application of a device which is both archaic and fundamental, it could conceivably have been perpetuated not by conscious observation of rules, but through unconscious conformity with a poetic structure that was perceived intuitively through experience of previous models evolved in the same conditions. After all, the objection that I come up against, on the part of conservative thinkers who refuse to accept that poetic inspiration depends on the play of a combinatory system, itself has its roots in a very old mysticism which, since the earliest times, may have consistently relegated the true mechanisms of aesthetic creation to the unconscious.

Perhaps because the involvement of musical expression with the intellect is less overt, musicians do not seem to have been similarly shy about recognizing and expounding the logical basis of their art. Treatises on counterpoint and harmony show how different structural distributions can only come into existence and be perceptible if they are distinguished from each other by differences of key, pitch, quality of tone and rhythm. Musicians have long known that they have two main means of composition: they can contrast structures with structures, or they can maintain the same structures while transforming their sensory expression: this is called development.

But also as they were becoming more and more clearly conscious of this latter device, and succeeded in listing and even codifying its possibilities, musicians very quickly weakened, banalized and sterilized the art of development to such an extent that its facile abuse eventually compelled them to emphasize the first means at the expense of the second. But then a new phenomenon occurred, when music began insidiously dissociating the phase of structure elaboration from the process of providing the structures with a sensory vehicle, both operations having been previously indistinguishable. These two aspects

of the work of musical creation tended from then on to separate off from each other, the link between form and sound became weaker, and the sensory system itself became one means, amongst other equally possible ones, of coding intelligible structures which have not first been conceived by the imagination as sound systems. The language of music has thus gradually broken away from what used to constitute its distinctive character—the fact that its latent structures were always a function of the sensory vehicle, and not the opposite. It is only through the variations in the sensory vehicle that the structures of traditional music preserve their individuality. As always and in all circumstances, the structure only becomes accessible by dint of a homomorphism, made possible by a redundancy of levels: a musical work is a sound system capable of inducing meanings in the mind of the listener.

The counterpart of the traditional conception of music would consist, then, of structures of meaning left in suspense, even if only theoretically, while waiting to be imbued with sounds. This is a fairly accurate definition of certain contemporary musical experiments which, rightly or wrongly, give the impression of using sounds to code systems of meaning which seem to have been imagined and worked out before being transposed into a musical form. It would not be incorrect, and in any case not at all belittling, to say that these experiments represent an anti-music; mythology, because of its bias in the direction of language, lies half-way between traditional music and this anti-music.

What I said above about the relationship of symmetry uniting mythology and music on either side of the transversal axis opposing mathematical entities to linguistic phenomena needs to be tempered and restricted by an important reservation: the symmetry is only valid, and has only continued, in the case of a particular kind of music, that which came into being in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and is now on the wane, after exhausting its possibilities for the reasons I have already mentioned. Far from enjoying any absolute existence, this symmetry is peculiar to a period of modern, contemporary history, and we may ask ourselves how it came into being, and why it is now tending to disappear.

It would seem that the point at which music and mythology began to appear as reversed images of each other coincided with the invention of the fugue, that is, a form of composition which, as I have shown on several occasions (*The Raw and the Cooked,* pp. 147–63, 240–55, and in *Naked Man,* pp. 115, 182, 337), exists in a fully developed form in the myths, from which music might at any time have borrowed it. If we ask what was peculiar about the period when music discovered the fugue, the answer is that it corresponded to the beginning of the modern age, when the forms of mythic thought were losing ground in the face of the new scientific knowledge, and were giving way to fresh modes of literary expression. With the invention of the fugue and other subsequent forms of composition, music took over the structures of mythic thought at a time when the literary narrative, in changing from myth to the novel, was ridding itself of these structures.[6] It was necessary, then, for myth as such to die for its form to escape from it, like the soul leaving the body, and to seek a means of reincarnation in music.

In short, it is as if music and literature had shared the heritage of myth between them. Music, in becoming modern with Frescobaldi and then Bach, took over its form, whereas the novel, which came into being about the same time, appropriated the deformalized residue of myth and, being henceforth released from the constraints of symmetry, found the means to develop as a free narrative. We thus arrive at a better understanding of the complementary natures of music and the novel, from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries to the present day: the former consists of formal constructions which are always looking for a meaning, and the latter of a meaning tending towards plurality, but disintegrating inwardly as it proliferates externally, because of the increasingly obvious lack of an internal framework; the New Novel tries to remedy the situation by external buttressing, but there is nothing left for the buttressing to support.

With the death of myth, music becomes mythical in the same way as works of art, with the death of religion, are no longer merely beautiful but become sacred. The aesthetic enjoyment they afford, even in the supreme cases, is out of all proportion to the exaggerated prices paid for them; at the same time, the category of the artistic is broadened at the lower end so as to include all sorts of utilitarian objects belonging to the pre-industrial era, or even to the early phase of industrialism when it still respected the traditional canons and strove to follow them in practice—or, as with *art nouveau,* to revitalize them—instead of obeying the dictates of economy and functionalism, as has been the case since. Following the pattern of communities without writing who, in their most sacred rituals, do not use European or even local instruments if they are man-made, but knives consisting of a sharp stone, a mollusc shell or a splinter of wood, and utensils cobbled together out of scraps of bark or twigs, of the sort that mankind must have used when still living in the state of nature, contemporary man, in similarly surrounding himself with precious objects or antique junk to which he accords an identical sacred status, is soothing his nostalgic longing for the secondary natural state that was lost after the primary one, and which is recalled by these surviving remnants of ages that have now become venerable through the sheer fact that they are gone forever. The different phases of culture take over from each other and each, when about to disappear, passes on its essence and its function to the next. Before taking the place of religion, the fine arts were in religion, as the forms of contemporary music were already in the myths before contemporary music came into being.

It was doubtless with Wagner that music first became conscious of the evolutionary process causing it to take over the structures of myth; and it was also at the same point that the art of development began to flag and mark time, while waiting for a renewal of the forms of composition to be initiated by Debussy. This assumption of consciousness also marked the beginning, and was perhaps even the cause, of a new stage of development, in which music was to have no other choice but to rid itself in turn of the mythic structures, which now became available so that myth could assume self-consciousness in the form of a discourse on itself. This being so, there is a correlational and oppositional relationship between my attempt to retrieve the myths for mod-

ern thought and the endeavors of modern music which, since the serial revolution, has on the contrary broken definitively away from myth by sacrificing signification to expressiveness and through a radical decision in favour of asymmetry. But, in so doing, it is perhaps only repeating a previous phase of development. Just as the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took over the structures of a dying mythology, might it not be the case that serial music, anticipating more recent developments, was simply taking over the expressive and rhapsodic forms of the novel, at the point at which the latter was preparing to empty itself of them in order to disappear in its turn?

Mythology and music have in common the fact that they summon the listener to a concrete form of union, with the difference, however, that myth offers him a pattern coded in images instead of sounds. In both cases, however, it is the listener who puts one or several potential meanings into the pattern, with the result that the real unity of the myth or the musical work is achieved by two participants, in and through a kind of celebration. The listener, as such, is not the creator of the music, either through a lack of natural ability or through the incidental fact that he is listening to someone else's music, but a place exists inside him for the music: he is, then, like the reverse, hollowed-out, image of a creator, whose empty spaces are filled by the music. The phenomenon is inexplicable, unless we admit that the non-composer has at his disposal a multiplicity of meanings, all at the ready and otherwise unused, which are attracted as if by a magnet to attach themselves to the sounds. Thus, the union of the sound proposed by the composer, and of the meaning present in a latent state in the listener, is reconstituted in a pseudo-language. When they encounter the music, meanings drifting half-submerged come to the surface and fit together according to lines of force analogous with those determining the patterning of the sounds. Hence a sort of intellectual and emotional coupling of the composer with the listener. They are both equally important, since each represents one of the two "sexes" of the music, whose carnal union is realized and solemnized in the performance. Only then do sound and sense meet up with each other to create a unique entity comparable to language, since in this case too there is a coming together of two halves, one consisting of a superabundance of sound (in relation to what the listener could have produced on his own) and the other of a superabundance of meaning (since the composer had no need of it to compose his work).

In both cases, the supplementary sound and the supplementary meaning are in excess of the needs peculiar to language, which uses sounds other than musical ones (so much so that it has been said that an ear for language and an ear for music are in inverse proportion to each other), and which is never able to give expression to the ineffable emotions and meanings that music arouses in its devotees. We can say, then, that musical communication and linguistic communication both suppose the union of sound and meaning; but it is also true to add that the sounds and meanings exploited in musical communication are precisely those that are not used in linguistic communication. In this respect, the two types of communication are in a relationship of supplementarity.

The comparison can be taken further. Within any community, the cate-

gory of myth excludes all dialogue: the members of the group do not contest its myths, but transform them while believing that they are repeating them. Sound and meaning, united in the mythic discourse, move together, step by step, down the line of successive narrators, instead of exchange or union occurring between them, as is the case with music, in or by the act of communication. On the other hand, the exchange peculiar to language also has as its medium molecules charged with both sound and meaning, but which move between speakers whose utterances take the form of statement and answer. In the musical field, exchange certainly occurs, as is the case in articulate language but not in mythic discourse. But music is like mythic discourse, not like articulate language, in that the exchange does not have as its medium bivalent and identically constituted molecules which, as we have seen in the case of myth, are transmitted in one direction only. The exchanged values are of a different kind: they consist of two sorts of monovalent molecules, some charged with sounds (music) or images (mythology), the others charged with meaning. When they meet, each sort communicates to the other sort the complementary charge which it lacked. Union which had previously been potential is achieved as if through an effect of copulation.

Notes

1. It will perhaps be objected that in the above mentioned work, I denied that totemism can be interpreted on the basis of a direct analogy between human groups and natural species. But this criticism was directed against a theory put forward by ethnologists and what is in question here is an—implicit or explicit—native theory which indeed corresponds to institutions that ethnologists would refuse to class as totemic.

2. At the beginning of a recent study, G. Balandier announced with much ceremony that it is high time that the social sciences "grasped society in its actual life and development." After which he describes, in very pertinent fashion moreover, institutions whose object is, to use his own terms, to "regroup" lineages threatened with dispersion; to "allay" their crumbling; to "recall" their solidarity, "establish" communication with the ancestors, "prevent separated members of the clan from becoming strangers to each other," furnish "an instrument of protection against conflicts," "control" and "master" antagonisms and subversions by means of a "minutely regulated" ritual which is "a factor reinforcing social and political structures." One is easily in agreement with him (while, however, questioning whether he is so with his own premises), that the institutions he began by denying to have been founded on "logical relations" and "fixed structures" (p. 23) demonstrate in fact the "prevalence of traditional social logic" (p. 33), and that "the classical system thus reveals, over a long period, a surprising capacity for 'assimilating'" (p. 34). The only surprising thing in all this is the author's own surprise.

3. These symbols refer to entries in Lévi-Strauss's index of myths at the end of *The Origin of Table Manners.* M. McK.

4. The author appears to be playing on the literal and rhetorical meanings of *la chute*: "fall," "collapse" and "end," "ending," "resolution" (cf. "dying fall"), and he is no doubt referring to the rejection of the concept of plot in the "New Novel." Trans.

5. Originally published under the title "Comment meurent les mythes," in *Science et conscience de la société: Mélanges en l'honneur de Raymond Aron* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1971), vol. i, pp. 131–143.

6. In *The Raw and the Cooked* (p. 15), when I was not yet looking to musical forms for anything more than what might be called methodological inspiration, I suggested that they preceded mythic forms, and it is true that these forms were first clarified in musical theory. We can measure, then, the distance covered between the overture to the first volume and the finale of the fourth: it has brought home to us the fact that we could not have looked for the structural modes of mythology in music, if mythology itself had not already found them.

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8

Northrop Frye

From Anatomy of Criticism

In the second paragraph of the *Poetics* Aristotle speaks of the differences in works of fiction which are caused by the different elevations of the characters in them. In some fictions, he says, the characters are better than we are, in others worse, in still others on the same level. This passage has not received much attention from modern critics, as the importance Aristotle assigns to goodness and badness seems to indicate a somewhat narrowly moralistic view of literature. Aristotle's words for good and bad, however, are *spoudaios* and *phaulos,* which have a figurative sense of weighty and light. In literary fictions the plot consists of somebody doing something. The somebody, if an individual, is the hero, and the something he does or fails to do is what he can do, or could have done, on the level of the postulates made about him by the author and the consequent expectations of the audience. Fictions, therefore, may be classified, not morally, but by the hero's power of action, which may be greater than ours, less, or roughly the same. Thus:

1. If superior in *kind* both to other men and to the environment of other men, the hero is a divine being, and the story about him will be a *myth* in the common sense of a story about a god. Such stories have an important place in literature, but are as a rule found outside the normal literary categories.
2. If superior in *degree* to other men and to his environment, the hero is the typical hero of *romance,* whose actions are marvelous but who is himself identified as a human being. The hero of romance moves in a world in which the ordinary laws of nature are slightly suspended: prodigies of courage and endurance, unnatural to us, are natural to him, and enchanted weapons, talking animals, terrifying ogres and witches, and talismans of miraculous power violate no rule of probability once the postulates of romance have been established. Here we have moved from myth, properly so called, into legend, folk tale, *märchen,* and their literary affiliates and derivatives.
3. If superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment, the hero is a leader. He has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours, but what he does is subject both to social criticism and to the order of nature. This is the hero of the *high mimetic* mode, of most epic and tragedy, and is primarily the kind of hero that Aristotle had in mind.

4. If superior neither to other men nor to his environment, the hero is one of us: we respond to a sense of his common humanity, and demand from the poet the same canons of probability that we find in our own experience. This gives us the hero of the *low mimetic* mode, of most comedy and of realistic fiction. "High" and "low" have no connotations of comparative value, but are purely diagrammatic, as they are when they refer to Biblical critics or Anglicans. On this level the difficulty in retaining the word "hero," which has a more limited meaning among the preceding modes, occasionally strikes an author. Thackeray thus feels obliged to call *Vanity Fair* a novel without a hero.
5. If inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity, the hero belongs to the *ironic* mode. This is still true when the reader feels that he is or might be in the same situation, as the situation is being judged by the norms of a greater freedom.

Looking over this table, we can see that European fiction, during the last fifteen centuries, has steadily moved its center of gravity down the list. In the pre-medieval period literature is closely attached to Christian, late Classical, Celtic, or Teutonic myths. If Christianity had not been both an imported myth and a devourer of rival ones, this phase of Western literature would be easier to isolate. In the form in which we possess it, most of it has already moved into the category of romance. Romance divides into two main forms: a secular form dealing with chivalry and knight-errantry, and a religious form devoted to legends of saints. Both lean heavily on miraculous violations of natural law for their interest as stories. Fictions of romance dominate literature until the cult of the prince and the courtier in the Renaissance brings the high mimetic mode into the foreground. The characteristics of this mode are most clearly seen in the genres of drama, particularly tragedy, and national epic. Then a new kind of middle-class culture introduces the low mimetic, which predominates in English literature from Defoe's time to the end of the nineteenth century. In French literature it begins and ends about fifty years earlier. During the last hundred years, most serious fiction has tended increasingly to be ironic in mode.

Something of the same progression may be traced in Classical literature too, in a greatly foreshortened form. Where a religion is mythological and polytheistic, where there are promiscuous incarnations, deified heroes and kings of divine descent, where the same adjective "godlike" can be applied either to Zeus or to Achilles, it is hardly possible to separate the mythical, romantic, and high mimetic strands completely. Where the religion is theological, and insists on a sharp division between divine and human natures, romance becomes more clearly isolated, as it does in the legends of Christian chivalry and sanctity, in the Arabian Nights of Mohammedanism, in the stories of the judges and thaumaturgic prophets of Israel. Similarly, the inability of the Classical world to shake off the divine leader in its later period has much to do with the abortive development of low mimetic and ironic modes that got barely started with Roman satire. At the same time the establishing of the

high mimetic mode, the developing of a literary tradition with a consistent sense of an order of nature in it, is one of the great feats of Greek civilization. Oriental fiction does not, so far as I know, get very far away from mythical and romantic formulas.

We shall here deal chiefly with the five epochs of Western literature, as given above, using Classical parallels only incidentally. In each mode a distinction will be useful between naive and sophisticated literature. The word naive I take from Schiller's essay on naive and sentimental poetry: I mean by it, however, primitive or popular, whereas in Schiller it means something more like Classical. The word sentimental also means something else in English, but we do not have enough genuine critical terms to dispense with it. In quotation marks, therefore, "sentimental" refers to a later re-creation of an earlier mode. Thus Romanticism is a "sentimental" form of romance, and the fairy tale, for the most part, a "sentimental" form of folk tale. Also there is a general distinction between fictions in which the hero becomes isolated from his society, and fictions in which he is incorporated into it. This distinction is expressed by the words "tragic" and "comic" when they refer to aspects of plot in general and not simply to forms of drama.

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The conception of a sequence of fictional modes should do something, let us hope, to give a more flexible meaning to some of our literary terms. The words "romantic" and "realistic," for instance, as ordinarily used, are relative or comparative terms: they illustrate tendencies in fiction, and cannot be used as simply descriptive adjectives with any sort of exactness. If we take the sequence *De Raptu Proserpinae, The Man of Law's Tale, Much Ado About Nothing, Pride and Prejudice, An American Tragedy,* it is clear that each work is "romantic" compared to its successors and "realistic" compared to its predecessors. On the other hand, the term "naturalism" shows up in its proper perspective as a phase of fiction which, rather like the detective story, though in a very different way, begins as an intensification of low mimetic, an attempt to describe life exactly as it is, and ends, by the very logic of that attempt, in pure irony. Thus Zola's obsession with ironic formulas gave him a reputation as a detached recorder of the human scene.

The difference between the ironic *tone* that we may find in low mimetic or earlier modes and the ironic *structure* of the ironic mode itself is not hard to sense in practice. When Dickens, for instance, uses irony the reader is invited to share in the irony, because certain standards of normality common to author and reader are assumed. Such assumptions are a mark of a relatively popular mode: as the example of Dickens indicates, the gap between serious and popular fiction is narrower in low mimetic than in ironic writing. The literary acceptance of relatively stable social norms is closely connected with the *reticence* of low mimetic as compared to ironic fiction. In low mimetic modes characters are usually presented as they appear to others, fully dressed and with a large section of both their physical lives and their inner monologue carefully excised. Such an approach is entirely consistent with the other conventions involved.

If we were to make this distinction the basis of a comparative value-judgement, which would, of course, be a moral value-judgement disguised as a critical one, we should be compelled either to attack low mimetic conventions for being prudish and hypocritical and leaving too much of life out, or to attack ironic conventions for not being wholesome, healthy, popular, reassuring, and sound, like the conventions of Dickens. As long as we are concerned simply to distinguish between the conventions, we need only remark that the low mimetic is one step more heroic than the ironic, and that low mimetic reticence has the effect of making its characters, on the average, more heroic, or at least more dignified, than the characters in ironic fiction.

We may also apply our scheme to the principles of selection on which a writer of fiction operates. Let us take, as a random example, the use of ghosts in fiction. In a true myth there can obviously be no consistent distinction between ghosts and living beings. In romance we have real human beings, and consequently ghosts are in a separate category, but in a romance a ghost as a rule is merely one more character: he causes little surprise because his appearance is no more marvellous than many other events. In high mimetic, where we are within the order of nature, a ghost is relatively easy to introduce because the plane of experience is above our own, but when he appears he is an awful and mysterious being from what is perceptibly another world. In low mimetic, ghosts have been, ever since Defoe, almost entirely confined to a separate category of "ghost stories." In ordinary low mimetic fiction they are inadmissible, "in complaisance to the scepticism of a reader," as Fielding puts it, a skepticism which extends only to low mimetic conventions. The few exceptions, such as *Wuthering Heights,* go a long way to prove the rule—that is, we recognize a strong influence of romance in *Wuthering Heights.* In some forms of ironic fiction, such as the later works of Henry James, the ghost begins to come back as a fragment of a disintegrating personality.

Once we have learned to distinguish the modes, however, we must then learn to recombine them. For while one mode constitutes the underlying tonality of a work of fiction, any or all of the other four may be simultaneously present. Much of our sense of the subtlety of great literature comes from this modal counterpoint. Chaucer is a medieval poet specializing mainly in romance, whether sacred or secular. Of his pilgrims, the knight and the parson clearly present the norms of the society in which he functions as a poet, and, as we have them, the *Canterbury Tales* are contained by these two figures, who open and close the series. But to overlook Chaucer's mastery of low mimetic and ironic techniques would be as wrong as to think of him as a modern novelist who got into the Middle Ages by mistake. The tonality of *Antony and Cleopatra* is high mimetic, the story of the fall of a great leader. But it is easy to look at Mark Antony ironically, as a man enslaved by passion; it is easy to recognize his common humanity with ourselves; it is easy to see in him a romantic adventurer of prodigious courage and endurance betrayed by a witch; there are even hints of a superhuman being whose legs bestrid the ocean and whose downfall is a conspiracy of fate, explicable only to a soothsayer. To leave out any of these would oversimplify and belittle the play. Through such an analysis we may come to realize that the two essential facts about a work of

art, that it is contemporary with its own time and that it is contemporary with ours, are not opposed but complementary facts.

Our survey of fictional modes has also shown us that the mimetic tendency itself, the tendency to verisimilitude and accuracy of description, is one of two poles of literature. At the other pole is something that seems to be connected both with Aristotle's word *mythos* and with the usual meaning of myth. That is, it is a tendency to tell a story which is in origin a story about characters who can do anything, and only gradually becomes attracted toward a tendency to tell a plausible or credible story. Myths of gods merge into legends of heroes; legends of heroes merge into plots of tragedies and comedies; plots of tragedies and comedies merge into plots of more or less realistic fiction. But these are change of social context rather than of literary form and the constructive principles of story-telling remain constant through them, though of course they adapt to them. Tom Jones and Oliver Twist are typical enough as low mimetic characters, but the birth-mystery plots in which they are involved are plausible adaptations of fictional formulas that go back to Menander, and from Menander to Euripides' Ion, and from Euripides to legends like those of Perseus and Moses. We note in passing that imitation of nature in fiction produces, not truth or reality, but plausibility, and plausibility varies in weight from a mere perfunctory concession in a myth or folk tale to a kind of censor principle in a naturalistic novel. Reading forward in history, therefore, we may think of our romantic, high mimetic and low mimetic modes as a series of *displaced* myths, *mythoi* or plot-formulas progressively moving over towards the opposite pole of verisimilitude, and then, with irony, beginning to move back.

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We begin our study of archetypes, then, with a world of myth, an abstract or purely literary world of fictional and thematic design, unaffected by canons of plausible adaptation to familiar experience. In terms of narrative, myth is the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desire. The gods enjoy beautiful women, fight one another with prodigious strength, comfort and assist man, or else watch his miseries from the height of their immortal freedom. The fact that myth operates at the top level of human desire does not mean that it necessarily presents its world as attained or attainable by human beings. In terms of meaning or *dianoia,* myth is the same world looked at as an area or field of activity, bearing in mind our principle that the meaning or pattern of poetry is a structure of imagery with conceptual implications. The world of mythical imagery is usually represented by the conception of heaven or Paradise in religion, and it is apocalyptic, in the sense of that word already explained, a world of total metaphor, in which everything is potentially identical with everything else, as though it were all inside a single infinite body.

Realism, or the art of verisimilitude, evokes the response "How like that is to what we know!" When what is written is *like* what is known, we have an art of extended or implied simile. And as realism is an art of implicit simile, myth is an art of implicit metaphorical identity. The word "sun-god," with a

hyphen used instead of a predicate, is a pure ideogram, in Pound's terminology, or literal metaphor, in ours. In myth we see the structural principles of literature isolated; in realism we see the *same* structural principles (not similar ones) fitting into a context of plausibility. (Similarly in music, a piece by Purcell and a piece by Benjamin Britten may not be in the least *like* each other, but if they are both in D major their tonality will be the same.) The presence of a mythical structure in realistic fiction, however, poses certain technical problems for making it plausible, and the devices used in solving these problems may be given the general name of *displacement.*

Myth, then, is one extreme of literary design; naturalism is the other, and in between lies the whole area of romance, using that term to mean, not the historical mode, but the . . . tendency . . . to displace myth in a human direction and yet, in contrast to "realism," to conventionalize content in an idealized direction. The central principle of displacement is that what can be metaphorically identified in a myth can only be linked in romance by some form of simile: analogy, significant association, incidental accompanying imagery, and the like. In a myth we can have a sun-god or a tree-god; in a romance we may have a person who is significantly associated with the sun or trees. In more realistic modes the association becomes less significant and more a matter of incidental, even coincidental or accidental, imagery. In the dragon-killing legend of the St. George and Perseus family, of which more hereafter, a country under an old feeble king is terrorized by a dragon who eventually demands the king's daughter, but is slain by the hero. This seems to be a romantic analogy (perhaps also, in this case, a descendant) of a myth of a waste land restored to life by a fertility god. In the myth, then, the dragon and the old king would be identified. We can in fact concentrate the myth still further into an Oedipus fantasy in which the hero is not the old king's son-in-law but his son, and the rescued damsel the hero's mother. If the story were a private dream such identifications would be made as a matter of course. But to make it a plausible, symmetrical, and morally acceptable story a good deal of displacement is necessary, and it is only after a comparative study of the story type has been made that the metaphorical structure within it begins to emerge.

In Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* the statue which gives the story that name is so insistently associated with a character named Donatello that a reader would have to be unusually dull or inattentive to miss the point that Donatello "is" the statue. Later on we meet a girl named Hilda, of singular purity and gentleness, who lives in a tower surrounded by doves. The doves are very fond of her; another character calls her his "dove," and remarks indicating some special affinity with doves are made about her by both author and characters. If we were to say that Hilda is a dove-goddess like Venus, identified with her doves, we should not be reading the story quite accurately in its own mode; we should be translating it into straight myth. But to recognize how close Hawthorne is to myth here is not unfair. That is, we recognize that *The Marble Faun* is not a typical low mimetic fiction: it is dominated by an interest that looks back to fictional romance and forward to the ironic mythical writers of the next century—to Kafka, for instance, or Cocteau. This interest is often

called allegory, but probably Hawthorne himself was right in calling it romance. We can see how this interest tends toward abstraction in character-drawing, and if we know no other canons than low mimetic ones, we complain of this.

Or, again, we have, in myth, the story of Proserpine, who disappears into the underworld for six months of every year. The pure myth is clearly one of death and revival; the story as we have it is slightly displaced, but the mythical pattern is easy to see. The same structural element often recurs in Shakespearean comedy, where it has to be adapted to a roughly high mimetic level of credibility. Hero in *Much Ado* is dead enough to have a funeral song, and plausible explanations are postponed until after the end of the play. Imogen in *Cymbeline* has an assumed name and an empty grave, but she too gets some funeral obsequies. But the story of Hermione and Perdita is so close to the Demeter and Proserpine myth that hardly any serious pretence of plausible explanations is made. Hermione, after her disappearance, returns once as a ghost in a dream, and her coming to life from a statue, a displacement of the Pygmalion myth, is said to require an awakening of faith, even though, on one level of plausibility, she has not been a statue at all, and nothing has taken place except a harmless deception. We notice how much more abstractly mythical a thematic writer can be than a fictional one: Spenser's Florimell, for instance, disappears under the sea for the winter with no questions asked, leaving a "snowy lady" in her place and returning with a great outburst of spring floods at the end of the fourth book.

In the low mimetic, we recognize the same structural pattern of the death and revival of the heroine when Esther Summerson gets smallpox, or Lorna Doone is shot at her marriage altar. But we are getting closer to the conventions of realism, and although Lorna's eyes are "dim with death," we know that the author does not really mean death if he is planning to revive her. Here again it is interesting to compare *The Marble Faun,* where there is so much about sculptors and the relation of statues to living people that we almost expect some kind of denouement like that of *The Winter's Tale.* Hilda mysteriously disappears, and during her absence her lover, the sculptor Kenyon, digs out of the earth a statue that he associates with Hilda. After that Hilda returns, with a plausible reason eventually assigned for her absence, but not without some rather pointed and petulant remarks from Hawthorne himself to the effect that he has no interest in concocting plausible explanations, and that he wishes his reading public would give him a bit more freedom. Yet Hawthorne's inhibitions seem to be at least in part self-imposed, as we can see if we turn to Poe's *Ligeia,* where the straight mythical death and revival pattern is given without apology. Poe is clearly a more radical abstractionist than Hawthorne, which is one reason why his influence on our century is more immediate.

This affinity between the mythical and the abstractly literary illuminates many aspects of fiction, especially the more popular fiction which is realistic enough to be plausible in its incidents and yet romantic enough to be a "good story," which means a clearly designed one. The introduction of an omen or portent, or the device of making a whole story the fulfilment of a prophecy

given at the beginning, is an example. Such a device suggests, in its existential projection, a conception of ineluctable fate or hidden omnipotent will. Actually, it is a piece of pure literary design, giving the beginning some symmetrical relationship with the end, and the only ineluctable will involved is that of the author. Hence we often find it even in writers not temperamentally much in sympathy with the portentous. In *Anna Karenina,* for instance, the death of the railway porter in the opening book is accepted by Anna as an omen for herself. Similarly, if we find portents and omens in Sophocles, they are there primarily because they fit the structure of his type of dramatic tragedy, and prove nothing about any clear-cut beliefs in fate held by either dramatist or audience.

We have, then, three organizations of myths and archetypal symbols in literature. First, there is undisplaced myth, generally concerned with gods or demons, and which takes the form of two contrasting worlds of total metaphorical identification, one desirable and the other undesirable. These worlds are often identified with the existential heavens and hells of the religions contemporary with such literature. These two forms of metaphorical organization we call the apocalyptic and the demonic respectively. Second, we have the general tendency we have called romantic, the tendency to suggest implicit mythical patterns in a world more closely associated with human experience. Third, we have the tendency of "realism" (my distaste for this inept term is reflected in the quotation marks) to throw the emphasis on content and representation rather than on the shape of the story. Ironic literature begins with realism and tends toward myth, its mythical patterns being as a rule more suggestive of the demonic than of the apocalyptic, though sometimes it simply continues the romantic tradition of stylization. Hawthorne, Poe, Conrad, Hardy and Virginia Woolf all provide examples.

In looking at a picture, we may stand close to it and analyze the details of brush work and palette knife. This corresponds roughly to the rhetorical analysis of the new critics in literature. At a little distance back, the design comes into clearer view, and we study rather the content represented: this is the best distance for realistic Dutch pictures, for example, where we are in a sense reading the picture. The further back we go, the more conscious we are of the organizing design. At a great distance from, say, a Madonna, we can see nothing but the archetype of the Madonna, a large centripetal blue mass with a contrasting point of interest at its center. In the criticism of literature, too, we often have to "stand back" from the poem to see its archetypal organization. If we "stand back" from Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantoes,* we see a background of ordered circular light and a sinister black mass thrusting up into the lower foreground—much the same archetypal shape that we see in the opening of the Book of Job. If we "stand back" from the beginning of the fifth act of *Hamlet,* we see a grave opening on the stage, the hero, his enemy, and the heroine descending into it, followed by a fatal struggle in the upper world. If we "stand back" from a realistic novel such as Tolstoy's *Resurrection* or Zola's *Germinal,* we can see the mythopoeic designs indicated by those titles. Other examples will be given in what follows.

We proceed to give an account first of the structure of imagery, or *dianoia,*

of the two undisplaced worlds, the apocalyptic and the demonic, drawing heavily on the Bible, the main source for undisplaced myth in our tradition. Then we go on to the two intermediate structures of imagery, and finally to the generic narratives or *mythoi* which are these structures of imagery in movement.

From Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology

The requirement of plausibility, then, has the apparently paradoxical effect of limiting the imagination by making its design more flexible. Thus in a Dutch realistic interior the painter's ability to render the sheen of satin or the varnish of a lute both limits his power of design (for a realistic painter cannot, like Braque or Juan Gris, distort his object in the interest of pictorial composition) and yet makes that design less easy to take in at a glance. In fact we often "read" Dutch pictures instead of looking at them, absorbed by their technical virtuosity but unaffected by much conscious sense of their total structure.

By this time the ambiguity in our word "imagination" is catching up with us. So far we have been using it in the sense of a structural power which, left to itself, produces rigorously predictable fictions. In this sense Bernard Shaw spoke of the romances of Marie Corelli as illustrating the triumph of imagination over mind. What is implied by "mind" here is less a structural than a reproductive power, which expresses itself in the texture of characterization and imagery. There seems no reason why this should not be called imagination too: in any case, in reading fiction there are two kinds of recognition. One is the continuous recognition of credibility, fidelity to experience, and of what is not so much lifelikeness as life-liveliness. The other is the recognition of the identity of the total design, into which we are initiated by the technical recognition in the plot.

The influence of mimetic fiction has thrown the main emphasis in criticism on the former kind of recognition. Coleridge, as is well known, intended the climax of the *Biographia Literaria* to be a demonstration of the "esemplastic" or structural nature of the imagination, only to discover when the great chapter arrived that he was unable to write it. There were doubtless many reasons for this, but one was that he does not really think of imagination as a constructive power at all. He means by imagination what we have called the reproductive power, the ability to bring to life the texture of characterization and imagery. It is to this power that he applies his favorite metaphor of an organism, where the unity is some mysterious and elusive "vitality." His practical criticism of work he admires is concerned with texture: he never discusses the total design, or what we call the theme, of a Shakespeare play. It is really fancy which is his "esemplastic" power, and which he tends to think of as mechanical. His conception of fancy as a mode of memory, emancipated from time and space and playing with fixities and definites, admirably characterizes the folk tale, with its remoteness from society and its stock of interchangeable motifs. Thus Coleridge is in the tradition of critical naturalism, which bases

its values on the immediacy of contact between art and nature that we continuously feel in the texture of mimetic fiction.

There is nothing wrong with critical naturalism, as far as it goes, but it does not do full justice to our feelings about the total design of a work of fiction. We shall not improve on Coleridge, however, by merely reversing his perspective, as T. E. Hulme did, and giving our favorable value-judgments to fancy, wit, and highly conventionalized forms. This can start a new critical trend, but not develop the study of criticism. In the direct experience of a new work of fiction we have a sense of its unity which we derive from its persuasive continuity. As the work becomes more familiar, this sense of continuity fades out, and we tend to think of it as a discontinuous series of episodes, held together by something which eludes critical analysis. But that this unity is available for critical study as well seems clear when it emerges as a unity of "theme," as we call it, which we can study all at once, and to which we are normally initiated by some crucial recognition in the plot. Hence we need a supplementary form of criticism which can examine the total design of fiction as something which is neither mechanical nor of secondary importance.

By a myth, as I said at the beginning, I mean primarily a certain type of story. It is a story in which some of the chief characters are gods or other beings larger in power than humanity. Very seldom is it located in history: its action takes place in a world above or prior to ordinary time, *in illo tempore,* in Mircea Eliade's phrase. Hence, like the folk tale, it is an abstract story-pattern. The characters can do what they like, which means what the storyteller likes: there is no need to be plausible or logical in motivation. The things that happen in myth are things that happen only in stories; they are in a self-contained literary world. Hence myth would naturally have the same kind of appeal for the fiction writer that folk tales have. It presents him with a ready-made framework, hoary with antiquity, and allows him to devote all his energies to elaborating its design. Thus the use of myth in Joyce or Cocteau, like the use of folk tale in Mann, is parallel to the use of abstraction and other means of emphasizing design in contemporary painting; and a modern writer's interest in primitive fertility rites is parallel to a modern sculptor's interest in primitive woodcarving.

The differences between myth and folk tale, however, also have their importance. Myths, as compared with folk tales, are usually in a special category of seriousness: they are believed to have "really happened," or to have some exceptional significance in explaining certain features of life, such as ritual. Again, whereas folk tales simply interchange motifs and develop variants, myths show an odd tendency to stick together and build up bigger structures. We have creation myths, fall and flood myths, metamorphosis and dying-god myths, divine-marriage and hero-ancestry myths, etiological myths, apocalyptic myths; and writers of sacred scriptures or collectors of myth like Ovid tend to arrange these in a series. And while myths themselves are seldom historical, they seem to provide a kind of containing form of tradition, one result of which is the obliterating of boundaries separating legend, historical reminiscence, and actual history that we find in Homer and the Old Testament.

As a type of story, myth is a form of verbal art, and belongs to the world of art. Like art, and unlike science, it deals, not with the world that man contemplates, but with the world that man creates. The total form of art, so to speak, is a world whose content is nature but whose form is human; hence when it "imitates" nature it assimilates nature to human forms. The world of art is human in perspective, a world in which the sun continues to rise and set long after science has explained that its rising and setting are illusions. And myth, too, makes a systematic attempt to see nature in human shape: it does not simply roam at large in nature like the folk tale.

The obvious conception which brings together the human form and the natural content in myth is the god. It is not the connection of the stories of Phaethon and Endymion with the sun and moon that makes them myths, for we could have folk tales of the same kind: it is rather their attachment to the body of stories told about Apollo and Artemis which gives them a canonical place in the growing system of tales that we call a mythology. And every developed mythology tends to complete itself, to outline an entire universe in which the "gods" represent the whole of nature in humanized form, and at the same time show in perspective man's origin, his destiny, the limits of his power, and the extension of his hopes and desires. A mythology may develop by accretion, as in Greece, or by rigorous codifying and the excluding of unwanted material, as in Israel; but the drive toward a verbal circumference of human experience is clear in both cultures.

The two great conceptual principles which myth uses in assimilating nature to human form are analogy and identity. Analogy establishes the parallels between human life and natural phenomena, and identity conceives of a "sun-god" or a "tree-god." Myth seizes on the fundamental element of design offered by nature—the cycle, as we have it daily in the sun and yearly in the seasons—and assimilates it to the human cycle of life, death, and (analogy again) rebirth. At the same time the discrepancy between the world man lives in and the world he would like to live in develops a dialectic in myth which, as in the New Testament and Plato's *Phaedo,* separates reality into two contrasting states, a heaven and a hell.

Again, myths are often used as allegories of science or religion or morality: they may arise in the first place to account for a ritual or a law, or they may be *exempla* or parables which illustrate a particular situation or argument, like the myths in Plato or Achilles' myth of the two jars of Zeus at the end of the Iliad. Once established in their own right, they may then be interpreted dogmatically or allegorically, as all the standard myths have been for centuries, in innumerable ways. But because myths are stories, what they "mean" is inside them, in the implications of their incidents. No rendering of any myth into conceptual language can serve as a full equivalent of its meaning. A myth may be told and retold: it may be modified or elaborated, or different patterns may be discovered in it; and its life is always the poetic life of a story, not the homiletic life of some illustrated truism. When a system of myths loses all connection with belief, it becomes purely literary, as Classical myth did in Christian Europe. Such a development would be impossible unless myths were inherently literary in structure. As it makes no difference to that structure

whether an interpretation of the myth is believed in or not, there is no difficulty in speaking of a Christian mythology.

Myth thus provides the main outlines and the circumference of a verbal universe which is later occupied by literature as well. Literature is more flexible than myth, and fills up this universe more completely: a poet or novelist may work in areas of human life apparently remote from the shadowy gods and gigantic story-outlines of mythology. But in all cultures mythology merges insensibly into, and with, literature. The Odyssey is to us a work of literature, but its early place in the literary tradition, the importance of gods in its action, and its influence on the later religious thought of Greece, are all features common to literature proper and to mythology, and indicate that the difference between them is more chronological than structural. Educators are now aware that any effective teaching of literature has to recapitulate its history and begin, in early childhood, with myths, folk tales and legends.

We should expect, therefore, that there would be a great many literary works derived directly from specific myths, like the poems by Drayton and Keats about Endymion which are derived from the myth of Endymion. But the study of the relations between mythology and literature is not confined to such one-to-one relationships. In the first place, mythology as a total structure, defining as it does a society's religious beliefs, historical traditions, cosmological speculations—in short, the whole range of its verbal expressiveness—is the matrix of literature, and major poetry keeps returning to it. In every age poets who are thinkers (remembering that poets think in metaphors and images, not in propositions) and are deeply concerned with the origin or destiny or desires of mankind—with anything that belongs to the larger outlines of what literature can express—can hardly find a literary theme that does not coincide with a myth. Hence the imposing body of explicitly mythopoeic poetry in the epic and encyclopedic forms which so many of the greatest poets use. A poet who accepts a mythology as valid for belief, as Dante and Milton accepted Christianity, will naturally use it; poets outside such a tradition turn to other mythologies as suggestive or symbolic of what might be believed, as in the adaptations of Classical or occult mythological systems made by Goethe, Victor Hugo, Shelley, or Yeats.

Similarly, the structural principles of a mythology, built up from analogy and identity, become in due course the structural principles of literature. The absorption of the natural cycle into mythology provides myth with two of these structures; the rising movement that we find in myths of spring or the dawn, of birth, marriage and resurrection, and the falling movement in myths of death, metamorphosis, or sacrifice. These movements reappear as the structural principles of comedy and tragedy in literature. Again, the dialectic in myth that projects a paradise or heaven above our world and a hell or place of shades below it reappears in literature as the idealized world of pastoral and romance and the absurd, suffering, or frustrated world of irony and satire.

The relation between myth and literature, therefore, is established by studying the genres and conventions of literature. Thus the convention of the pastoral elegy in *Lycidas* links it to Virgil and Theocritus, and thence with the myth of Adonis. Thus the convention of the foundling plot, which is the basis

of *Tom Jones* and *Oliver Twist,* goes back to Menandrine comedy formulas, thence to Euripides, and so back to such myths as the finding of Moses and Perseus. In myth criticism, when we examine the theme or total design of a fiction, we must isolate that aspect of the fiction which is conventional, and held in common with all other works of the same category. When we begin, say, *Pride and Prejudice,* we can see at once that a story which sustains that particular mood or tone is most unlikely to end in tragedy or melodrama or mordant irony or romance. It clearly belongs to the category represented by the word "comedy," and we are not surprised to find in it the conventional features of comedy, including a foolish lover, with some economic advantages, encouraged by one of the parents, a hypocrite unmasked, misunderstandings between the chief characters eventually cleared up and happy marriages for those who deserve them. This conventional comic form is in *Pride and Prejudice* somewhat as the sonata form is in a Mozart symphony. Its presence there does not account for any of the merits of the novel, but it does account for its conventional, as distinct from its individual, structure. A serious interest in structure, then, ought naturally to lead us from *Pride and Prejudice* to a study of the comic form which it exemplifies, the conventions of which have presented much the same features from Plautus to our own day. These conventions in turn take us back into myth. When we compare the conventional plot of a play of Plautus with the Christian myth of a son appeasing the wrath of a father and redeeming his bride, we can see that the latter is quite accurately described, from a literary point of view, as a divine comedy.

Whenever we find explicit mythologizing in literature, or a writer trying to indicate what myths he is particularly interested in, we should treat this as confirmatory or supporting evidence for our study of the genres and conventions he is using. Meredith's *The Egoist* is a story about a girl who narrowly escapes marrying a selfish man, which makes many references, both explicitly and indirectly in its imagery, to the two best-known myths of female sacrifice, the stories of Andromeda and Iphigeneia. Such allusions would be pointless or unintelligible except as indications by Meredith of an awareness of the conventional shape of the story he is telling. Again, it is as true of poetry as it is of myth that its main conceptual elements are analogy and identity, which reappear in the two commonest figures of speech, the simile and the metaphor. Literature, like mythology, is largely an art of misleading analogies and mistaken identities. Hence we often find poets, especially young poets, turning to myth because of the scope it affords them for uninhibited poetic imagery. If Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* had been simply a story about a willing girl and an unwilling boy, all the resources of analogy and identity would have been left unexplored: the fanciful imagery appropriate to the mythical subject would have been merely tasteless exaggeration. Especially is this true with what may be called sympathetic imagery, the association of human and natural life:

> No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf, or weed,
> But stole his blood and seem'd with him to bleed.

The opposite extreme from such deliberate exploiting of myth is to be found in the general tendency of realism or naturalism to give imaginative life

and coherence to something closely resembling our own ordinary experience. Such realism often begins by simplifying its language, and dropping the explicit connections with myth which are a sign of an awareness of literary tradition. Wordsworth, for example, felt that in his day Phoebus and Philomela were getting to be mere trade slang for the sun and the nightingale, and that poetry would do better to discard this kind of inorganic allusion. But, as Wordsworth himself clearly recognized, the result of turning one's back on explicit myth can only be the reconstructing of the same mythical patterns in more ordinary words:

> Paradise, and groves
> Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
> Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
> A history only of departed things,
> Or a mere fiction of what never was?
> For the discerning intellect of Man,
> When wedded to this goodly universe
> In love and holy passion, shall find these
> A simple produce of the common day.

To this indirect mythologizing I have elsewhere given the name of displacement. By displacement I mean the techniques a writer uses to make his story credible, logically motivated or morally acceptable—lifelike, in short. I call it displacement for many reasons, but one is that fidelity to the credible is a feature of literature that can affect only content. Life presents a continuum, and a selection from it can only be what is called a *tranche de vie:* plausibility is easy to sustain, but except for death life has little to suggest in the way of plausible conclusions. And even a plausible conclusion does not necessarily round out a shape. The realistic writer soon finds that the requirements of literary form and plausible content always fight against each other. Just as the poetic metaphor is always a logical absurdity, so every inherited convention of plot in literature is more or less mad. The king's rash promise, the cuckold's jealousy, the "lived happily ever after" tag to a concluding marriage, the manipulated happy endings of comedy in general, the equally manipulated ironic endings of modern realism—none of these was suggested by any observation of human life or behavior: all exist solely as story-telling devices. Literary shape cannot come from life; it comes only from literary tradition, and so ultimately from myth. In sober realism, like the novels of Trollope, the plot, as we have noted, is often a parody plot. It is instructive to notice, too, how strong the popular demand is for such forms as detective stories, science fiction, comic strips, comic formulas like the P. G. Wodehouse stories, all of which are as rigorously conventional and stylized as the folk tale itself, works of pure "esemplastic" imagination, with the recognition turning up as predictably as the caesura in minor Augustan poetry.

One difficulty in proceeding from this point comes from the lack of any literary term which corresponds to the word "mythology." We find it hard to conceive of literature as an order of words, as a unified imaginative system that can be studied as a whole by criticism. If we had such a conception, we could

readily see that literature as a whole provides a framework or context for every work of literature, just as a fully developed mythology provides a framework or context for each of its myths. Further, because mythology and literature occupy the same verbal space, so to speak, the framework or context of every work of literature can be found in mythology as well, when its literary tradition is understood. It is relatively easy to see the place of a myth in a mythology, and one of the main uses of myth criticism is to enable us to understand the corresponding place that a work of literature has in the context of literature as a whole.

Putting works of literature in such a context gives them an immense reverberating dimension of significance. (If anyone is worrying about value-judgments, I should add that establishing such a context tends to make the genuine work of literature sublime and the pinchbeck one ridiculous.) This reverberating significance, in which every literary work catches the echoes of all other works of its type in literature, and so ripples out into the rest of literature and thence into life, is often, and wrongly, called allegory. We have allegory when one literary work is joined to another, or to a myth, by a certain interpretation of meaning rather than by structure. Thus *The Pilgrim's Progress* is related allegorically to the Christian myth of redemption, and Hawthorne's story, *The Bosom Serpent,* is related allegorically to various moral serpents going back to the Book of Genesis. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible,* already mentioned, deals with the Salem witch trials in a way that suggested McCarthyism to most of its original audience. This relation in itself is allegorical. But if *The Crucible* is good enough to hold the stage after McCarthyism has become as dead an issue as the Salem trials, it would be clear that the theme of *The Crucible* is one which can always be used in literature, and that any social hysteria can form its subject matter. Social hysteria, however, is the content and not the form of the theme itself, which belongs in the category of the purgatorial or triumphant tragedy. As so often happens in literature, the only explicit clue to its mythical shape is provided by the title.

To sum up. In the direct experience of a new work of literature, we are aware of its continuity or moving power in time. As we become both more familiar with and more detached from it, the work tends to break up into a discontinuous series of felicities, bits of vivid imagery, convincing characterization, witty dialogue, and the like. The study of this belongs to what we have called critical naturalism or continuous recognition, the sense of the sharply focused reproduction of life in the fiction. But there was a feeling of unity in the original experience which such criticism does not recapture. We need to move from a criticism of "effects" to what we may call a criticism of causes, specifically the formal cause which holds the work together. The fact that such unity is available for critical study as well as for direct experience is normally symbolized by a crucial recognition, a point marking a real and not merely apparent unity in the design. Fictions like those of Trollope which appeal particularly to critical naturalism often play down or even parody such a device, and such works show the highest degree of displacement and the least conscious or explicit relationship to myth.

If, however, we go on to study the theme or total shape of the fiction, we

find that it also belongs to a convention or category, like those of comedy and tragedy. With the literary category we reach a dead end, until we realize that literature is a reconstructed mythology, with its structural principles derived from those of myth. Then we can see that literature is in a complex setting what a mythology is in a simpler one: a total body of verbal creation. In literature, whatever has a shape has a mythical shape, and leads us toward the center of the order of words. For just as critical naturalism studies the counterpoint of literature and life, words and things, so myth criticism pulls us away from "life" toward a self-contained and autonomous literary universe. But myth, as we said at the beginning, means many things besides literary structure, and the world of words is not so self-contained and autonomous after all.

From The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance

Literary critics have inherited from Aristotle two principles: one, the conception of art as imitating nature; the other, the distinction of form and content. In nonliterary writing, the verbal structure imitates what it describes in the way that a copy imitates an external model. In literature, however, the art is the form, and the nature which the art imitates is the content, so in literature art imitates nature by containing it internally. This principle is a practical one, and still very useful: one limitation of it is that it relates only to the work of art as product, as finished and done with. It is perhaps more natural for us today to think in terms of continuous process or creative activity, and for that we need two other conceptions parallel to form and content.

In the context of process, the form becomes something more like the shaping spirit, the power of ordering which seems so mysterious to the poet himself, because it often acts as though it were an identity separate from him. What corresponds to content is the sense of otherness, the resistance of the material, the feeling that there is something to be overcome, or at least struggled with. Wallace Stevens calls these two elements imagination and reality: as often with Stevens' terminology, the words are used much more precisely than they appear to be, and I shall adopt them here.

The imagination, then, is the constructive power of the mind, the power of building unities out of units. In literature the unity is the *mythos* or narrative; the units are metaphors, that is, images connected primarily with each other rather than separately with the outer world. "Reality," for Stevens, is whatever the imagination works with that is not itself. Left to itself, the imagination can achieve only a facile pseudo-conquest of its own formulas, meeting no resistance from reality. The long-standing association between the words imagination and fancy may suggest that the imaginative, by itself, tends to be fantastic or fanciful. But actually, what the imagination, left to itself, produces is the rigidly conventionalized. In folktales, plot-themes and motifs are predictable enough to be counted and indexed; improvised drama, from *commedia dell'arte* to guerrilla theater, is based on formulas with a minimum of variables. Anyone recording, or reading about, reveries, daydreams, or conscious sexual fantasies must be struck by the total absence in such things of anything like real fantasy. They are formulaic, and the formulaic unit, of phrase or story, is the cornerstone of the creative imagination, the simplest form of what I call an archetype.

In the course of struggling with a world which is separate from itself, the

imagination has to adapt its formulaic units to the demands of that world, to produce what Aristotle calls the probable impossibility. The fundamental technique used is what I call displacement, the adjusting of formulaic structures to a roughly credible context. A friend of mine, at the beginning of his teaching career, was faced with teaching a "creative writing" course to students of very limited literary experience. One of his devices was to give them a Grimm fairy tale and tell them to displace it, turning it into a plausible story in which every detail of the original would be accounted for. A literary example of such a technique is Ibsen's *Vikings at Helgeland,* a displacement of the Sigurd saga. Here Fafnir the dragon has become a tame bear, the changing of shapes in the original is accounted for by the heroine's being slightly drunk, and so on. Artificial displacements of this kind are useful mainly for practice pieces; but it is clear even from this example that realistic displacement is closely related to parody.

In the fiction-writing of the last four or five centuries there has been a kind of reversible shuttle moving between imagination and reality, as Stevens uses those words. One direction is called "romantic," the other "realistic." The realistic tendency moves in the direction of the representational and the displaced, the romantic tendency in the opposite direction, concentrating on the formulaic units of myth and metaphor. At the extreme of imagination we find the themes and motifs of folktale, elements of the process that Coleridge distinguished as fancy, and described as "a mode of memory" playing with "fixities and definites." At the extreme of realism comes what is often called "naturalism," and at the extreme of that the shaping spirit wanders among documentary, expository, or reminiscent material, unable to find a clear narrative line from a beginning to an end.

Problems of design, of composition and balance and contrast, are obviously as central in the verbal arts as they are in music or painting. They appear in the rhetorical texture, an obvious example being the antithetical structure that we find in Hebrew parallelism, the Latin elegiac, and the English heroic couplet. They appear in the ballet-like couplings and intertwinings of characters in Goethe's *Elective Affinities* or Henry James' *Golden Bowl;* and they appear in contrapuntal plots like the story of Gloucester in *King Lear.* Characters occupy the *designed* time and space of their creators; they may as logically end their fictional lives at marriage as at death; their paths may cross in sheer "coincidence." The more undisplaced the story, the more sharply the design stands out. Later on we shall refer to Carlo Gozzi, the eighteenth-century Italian dramatist who is useful to a study of romance because he writes undisplaced fairy tales full of magic and metamorphosis. We are not surprised to find that it was Gozzi who maintained that the entire range of dramatic possibilities could be reduced to thirty-six basic situations. The inference for us is that even the most contrived and naive romantic plot, even the most impossibly black-and-white characterization, may still give us some technical insight into the way that stories get told.

The romantic tendency is antirepresentational, and so is parallel to the development of abstract or primitive movements in painting. Critics of painting have learned to examine such pictures on their own terms; critics of fiction

have to learn to look at romances, with all their nonrepresentational plots and characters, equally on their own terms. Many Victorian critics of painting demanded anecdotal pictures, because their frame of reference was literary, and so they felt that if a picture were just a picture there would be nothing to say about it. Many literary critics, even yet, are in the same position when confronted with a romance which is "just a story."

When the novel was established in the eighteenth century, it came to a reading public familiar with the formulas of prose romance. It is clear that the novel was a realistic displacement of romance, and had few structural features peculiar to itself. *Robinson Crusoe, Pamela, Tom Jones,* use much the same general structure as romance, but adapt that structure to a demand for greater conformity to ordinary experience. This displacement gave the novel's relation to romance, as I suggested a moment ago, a strong element of parody. It would hardly be too much to say that realistic fiction, from Defoe to Henry James, is, when we look at it as a form of narrative technique, essentially parody-romance. Characters confused by romantic assumptions about reality, who emphasize the same kind of parody, are central to the novel: random examples include Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, Lord Jim, and Isabel Archer.

The supreme example of the realistic parody of romance is of course *Don Quixote,* which signalized the death of one kind of fiction and the birth of another kind. But the tradition of parody can be traced all through the history of the novel, up to and beyond *Ulysses,* and extends to many novelists who have been thought to be still too close to romance. Thus Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* began as a parody of *Pamela,* and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* is a parody of Gothic romance. The sketches that Jane Austen produced in her teens are nearly all burlesques of popular romantic formulas. And yet, if we read *Pride and Prejudice* or *Emma* and ask the first question about it, which is: what is Jane Austen doing: what is it that drives her pen from one corner of the page to the other, the answer is of course that she is telling a story. The story is the soul of her writing, to use Aristotle's metaphor, the end for which all the words are put down. But if we concentrate on the shape of her stories, we are studying something that brings her much closer to her romantic colleagues, even to the writers of the horrid mysteries she parodied. Her characters are believable, yet every so often we become aware of the tension between them and the outlines of the story into which they are obliged to fit. This is particularly true of the endings, where the right men get married to the right women, although the inherent unlikelihood of these unions has been the main theme of the story. All the adjustments are made with great skill, but the very skill shows that form and content are not quite the same thing: they are two things that have to be unified.

The Waverley novels of Scott mark the absorption of realistic displacement into romance itself. Scott begins his preface to *Waverley* by outlining a number of facile romance formulas that he is *not* going to follow, and then stresses the degree of reality that his story is to have. His hero Waverley is a romantic hero, proud of his good looks and education, but, like a small-scale Don Quixote, his romantic attitude is one that confirms the supremacy of real life. He is over-impressionable, and his loves and loyalties are alike immature.

If not really what Scott later called him, "a sneaking piece of imbecility," he is certainly in the central parody-romance tradition of characterization. Parody enters the structure of many other semi-romantic novels, though sometimes, as in the later novels of Dickens, it appears to be largely unconscious. In *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend* the romantic element, a sprawling octopus of a plot involving disguise, conspiracy, mystery, suspense, and violence, which we can hardly follow at the time and cannot remember afterwards, seems to be almost an anti-narrative. Some features of *Ulysses,* such as the parody of popular female fiction in the "Nausicaa" episode, are similar, and indicate that the real affinities of *Ulysses* are with the past, the tradition stretching from Defoe of which it seems a kind of swan song.

The association of parody and displacement is particularly clear in the many stories, from Mrs. Radcliffe in the eighteenth century to certain types of detective fiction in our day, in which the reader's interest in some fantastic or supernatural situation is worked up, only to be deflated again with a commonplace explanation. In Scott's *Anne of Geierstein* the heroine engages in a certain amount of moonlight flitting, and it is suggested that she is descended from a fairy or elemental spirit, and has acquired by this heredity the ability to transport herself through space without the usual physical movements. A long inset tale is told about her grandmother to lend emotional weight to this suggestion; but eventually everything she does is explained on more or less plausible grounds. The implication in such a device is that fairy tales are for children: the mature reader will want and expect a more matter-of-fact account. The fantasy here is introduced because the action of *Anne of Geierstein* takes place in the fifteenth century, and such fantasy illustrates the kind of superstitions that people at that time had. However, the real effect of the device is to put the undisplaced and displaced versions of the same event side by side. Its significance, then, is not in any child-and-adult value judgment about beliefs, but in the fact that undisplaced versions present the narrative structure more abstractly, just as a cubist or primitive painting would present the geometrical forms of its images more directly than straight representation would do.

As soon as the novel established itself as a respectable literary medium, critics promptly assimilated it to the old Platonic-Christian framework, as described in the previous chapter. The serious literary artists who tell stories in prose, according to this view, also tell us something about the life of their times, and about human nature as it appears in that context, while doing so. Below them comes romance, where the story is told primarily for the sake of the story. This kind of writing is assumed to be much more of a commercial product, and the romancer is considered to have compromised too far with popular literature. Popular literature itself is obviously still in the doghouse.

This means that what gives a novelist moral dignity is not the story he tells, but a wisdom and insight brought to bear on the world outside literature, and which he has managed to capture within literature. This is what distinguishes George Eliot from Marie Corelli, Joseph Conrad from John Buchan, D. H. Lawrence from Elinor Glyn. All through the nineteenth century and our own there had also been a flourishing development of romance and fantasy, in Wilkie Collins, Bulwer-Lytton, Lewis Carroll, William Morris, and

others. Some of these writers were immensely popular in their day, and a few, like Lewis Carroll, have never lost their popularity. But they do not seem to fit the history of fiction as defined by the great realists: they are simply other writers. On the boundary of serious fiction and romance are Scott and Dickens, whose reputations have oscillated a good deal between the two ranks. The setting of *Waverley,* we notice, is a genuine historical event, the 1745 rebellion, and the book is equipped with footnotes indicating an essential mark of literary seriousness, the ability to read nonliterary documents. But Scott came finally to be regarded as too much of a romancer to be worthy of close study. Dickens fared rather better: he too was darkly suspected of being a mere entertainer, but he had obvious social concerns, and besides, he wrote *Hard Times,* a novel so dull that he must surely have had some worthy nonliterary motive for producing it.

The prevailing conception of serious fiction is enshrined in the title of F. R. Leavis' book *The Great Tradition,* a study of George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad which assumes that these writers are central in a hierarchy of realistic novelists extending roughly from Defoe to D. H. Lawrence. The assumption seems reasonable, yet when empires start building walls around themselves it is a sign that their power is declining, and the very appearance of such a title indicates a coming change of fashion on the part of both writers and readers. As soon as a defensive wall is in place, the movements of the barbarians on the frontiers, in this case the readers of romance, Westerns, murder mysteries, and science fiction, begin to take on greater historical importance. These movements assumed a more definite shape after the appearance of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* in the mid-fifties. On the T. S. Eliot principle that every writer creates his own tradition, the success of Tolkien's book helped to show that the tradition behind it, of George MacDonald and Lewis Carroll and William Morris, was, if not "the great" tradition, a tradition nonetheless. It is a tradition which interests me rather more than Tolkien himself ever did, but for a long time I was in a minority in my tastes. Over twenty years ago, in the remotest corner of a secondhand bookshop, I picked up a cheap reprint of William Morris' *The Roots of the Mountains.* The bookseller remarked that the two little green volumes had been sitting on his shelves since the day he opened his shop in 1913. Fortunately he had some other stock that moved faster, but if the shop is still there it is probably featuring paperback reprints of William Morris romances in a series which, though still cautiously labeled "adult fantasy," seems to be finding its public.

The change of taste in favor of romance raises a good many questions about the validity of some common critical assumptions about fiction which have been fostered by the prestige of a displaced and realistic tradition. There is still a strong tendency to avoid problems of technique and design and structure in fiction, and to concentrate on what the book talks about rather than on what it actually presents. It is still not generally understood either that "reality" in literature cannot be presented at all except within the conventions of literary structure, and that those conventions must be understood first.

Part Three

The Novel as Displacement II: Psychoanalysis

On the evidence of the crucial figure of displacement, psychoanalytic theory, like structuralism, supports a view of the novel as a devolutionary falling off from pristine representations of meaning. But how are we to conceive the correlation between the structuralist focus on the collective cultural sequence of discursive forms and the psychoanalytic focus on the sequence of individual psychic change?

Freud's interpretation of dreams provides one micro-model for the macro-devolution evident in the structuralist account of how myth degenerates into the novel, how tradition degenerates into modernity. In these terms, the latent content of the unconscious dream thoughts corresponds to the pure and essential form of myth. The dream-work transforms these thoughts into a conscious or manifest content—the dream we remember when we awake—that corresponds to the more elaborated representations of romance or novelistic narrative. Just as Lévi-Strauss describes the latter process as one that "distorts"—and Frye as one that "censors"—mythic form, so Freud calls the dream-work a process of "dream-distortion" or "censorship." And Frye's figure for the chronological sequence of literary forms, "displacement," is of course a borrowing from Freud, who describes it more precisely as a "displacement of psychical intensities" whereby the affective interest or meaning of the latent content is obscured by the mechanism of the dream-work. Displacement's semantic distortion is completed by the process of "condensation," which selects only a few elements from the latent content to include in the manifest content of the dream, namely, those elements that are maximally "overdetermined" in the sense that they economically represent the greatest range and number of dream thoughts. The dream-work, then, corresponds at the micro-level of psychic production to the macro-level production of narrative content that adapts myth to the plausibility demands of social context; the dream-work does to the dream-thoughts what "history" does to structure.

But for all its coherence, the correspondence between these two models of how pristine meaning comes to be distorted by a censoring mechanism is complicated by a suggestive disparity in the appearance of the respective narrative products. Whereas manifest dreams are "brief, meager, and laconic" com-

pared to the latent thoughts that are their source, novels are just the opposite: prolix and bristling with accretions that evince a distortion through not compression but elaboration, not over- but under-determination. Does this mean that we should seek a micro-parallel to the production of the novel in the production not of the dream but of the dream analysis, which employs the method of free association to disclose the "copious associative connections" that lead back to the semantic locus of the dream-thoughts? If the fullness of novelistic narrative corresponds to the fullness of dream analysis, mythic form becomes the equivalent of the manifest dream content, its tight coherence a mark of its overdetermined and distorting displacement. Historical diachrony and the elaboration of plausible narrative details become the mechanism by which meaning is produced, not a displacement but an emplacement that culminates a three-part periodization represented on the micro-level by the sequence from dream-thoughts to dream-work to dream analysis.

Has Frye misapplied the displacement figure to the production of the novel? The ambiguity—our uncertainty about how the psychic micro-scheme corresponds to the cultural macro-chronology—is fruitful, because it reminds us to correct for the partiality of the devolutionary view of the novel by confronting it with its equally partial, evolutionary antithesis. "Family Romances" enriches the correlation of psychic and cultural production in two respects. First, it expands the basic three-part scheme of psychic production—dream-thoughts, dream-work, dream analysis—into what more fully deserves to be called a chronology of the individual psyche, a developmental series of stages that invite a more secure correlation with Frye's "epochs of Western literature." Second, "Family Romances" multiplies the range of relevant "psycho-genres," taking in not only dreams but fantasies, daydreams, romances, even "hero-myths" and applying to them all a term, "works of fiction," that deepens the suggestiveness of psychoanalytic theory for a historical theory of the novel. This is of course the implication of Freud's title, which associates a crucial psychic production with one of the great narrative forms of Western culture. Robert's reading helps us unfold some of these implications.[1]

As with dream production, here too we begin with a latent affective nexus, the feeling of being slighted, that provides the basis for a conscious fantasy "of being a step-child or an adopted child." The fantasy has two stages of development, both of which are fueled by "the motive of revenge and retaliation" and "serve as the fulfilment of wishes and as a correction of actual life." In the first (Robert's Foundling) stage, both parents "are replaced by others of better birth," a fantasy that may be more or less fully articulated insofar as it

1. The correlation between the chronology of the individual psyche and that of the collective culture recalls the popular biological maxim "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny": the embryonic development of the individual organism parallels the evolutionary development of the species. Discredited by evolutionary theory, the maxim remains tantalizing for cultural theory. Freud's developmental sequence of the oral, anal, and genital stages, for example, might seem to evoke the oral, literate, and typographical stages of cultural production. Of course the parallel is deceptive: the productive mechanism at work in "oral culture" is precisely what's lacking in pre-Oedipal orality, speech. On the other hand, there's a suggestive interplay in both sequences between the diachronic complication of narrative and the selective powers of memory.

is "worked out with greater or less effort to obtain verisimilitude." The second (or Bastard) stage significantly extends this effort at what Frye might call the "plausible adaptation" of form to social context (or the displacement of metaphor into simile or metonymy) by sharply distinguishing between father and mother. Whereas the younger child "only perceived his parents in a general projection or identification which abolished their separateness" (Robert), the older child continues to imagine an exalted father but now accepts the real identity of the mother, thereby opening up the former, dyadic relationship to the sexualized Oedipal triangle and its well-known psychic implications.

Sexual difference shapes the family romance at both stages of its development. Fundamentally an "imaginative activity," the fantasy is (with apparently axiomatic logic) therefore also stronger in boys than in girls (indeed, both Freud and Robert seem to assume a male subject). This difference between boys and girls is then thematized at the Bastard stage as the difference between the fantasized father and the real mother, even as that between the "pleasure principle" and the "reality principle" (Robert). Although Robert's acute attentiveness to the macro-developmental implications of Freud's psychology should ensure a comparable centrality of sexual difference to the history of literary forms, she doesn't pursue it directly, and her hypothesis about the development of romance is suggestive but (perhaps intentionally) imprecise. Are we to see the Foundling and the Bastard plots as respectively fantastic and realistic, hence "male" and "female"; as two stages of romance; as two stages of the novel; as the transition from romance to realism; or as narrative possibilities of indeterminate chronology? Robert writes as though all of these may be true. And since for Robert all versions of the family romance—in fact, all fictions—express the universality of the Oedipus complex, the stages in the psychic history have, like Frye's five epochs, a built-in potential for semantic collapsibility that limits its utility in disclosing a clear development in generic history.[2]

But the problem of development also returns us to the fruitful ambiguity we've already encountered. Does the novel correspond to the devolutionary stage of dream-work or to the evolutionary stage of dream analysis? By working within Freud's normative scheme of psychic development, "Family Romances" suggests how this simple opposition needs to be complicated. As a semantic process, the movement from the Foundling to the Bastard version of the family romance is "devolutionary" because its fuller narrative elaboration also obscures more thoroughly the original affective nexus, the pure and monolithic feeling of being slighted. As a developmental process, however, this movement is "evolutionary" because necessary to normal development: "The freeing of an individual, as he grows up, from the authority of his parents is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development." In fact, the "semantic regress" entailed in the replacement of the Foundling by the Bastard plot underwrites

2. Robert affords us no way to account for the semantic differences between the variously parodic tropes of the family romance in *Don Quixote, Pamela, Joseph Andrews, Hard Times,* and *Daniel Deronda.*

the "developmental progress" of the subject in question. To forgo this semantic regress is to risk developmental regress, a neurotic fixation that involves the pathological repetition of the fantasy as a "symptomatic archaism in the adult psyche" which nonetheless also sustains a persistent and "undying" truth (Robert). In this way, the unpromising thesis of a universal and transhistorical fantasy yields a cultural historiography of real interest. Continuity and discontinuity are figured not antithetically, as the dichotomous opposition between form and content, structure and history, but as the ongoingness of a fantasy that both persists and, in response to changing circumstances, is "replaced" by distinct versions of itself.[3] Similarly, Freud's understanding of the function of fantasy (from which Lévi-Strauss learned a great deal) has the complexity of a process that aims at a paradoxical but therapeutic representation through concealment. In Robert's words, the purpose of the family romance is "to relate without revealing, and simultaneously to resolve."

3. Robert's view of the novel as "a *compulsory content* and an *optional form*," besides inverting structuralist usage (where form is static and content dynamic), also does less than justice to the dialectical force of this historiography.

9

Sigmund Freud

From The Interpretation of Dreams

The Work of Condensation

The first thing that becomes clear to anyone who compares the dream-content with the dream-thoughts is that a work of *condensation* on a large scale has been carried out. Dreams are brief, meager and laconic in comparison with the range and wealth of the dream-thoughts. If a dream is written out it may perhaps fill half a page. The analysis setting out the dream-thoughts underlying it may occupy six, eight or a dozen times as much space. This relation varies with different dreams; but so far as my experience goes its direction never varies. As a rule one underestimates the amount of compression that has taken place, since one is inclined to regard the dream-thoughts that have been brought to light as the complete material, whereas if the work of interpretation is carried further it may reveal still more thoughts concealed behind the dream. I have already had occasion to point out that it is in fact never possible to be sure that a dream has been completely interpreted. Even if the solution seems satisfactory and without gaps, the possibility always remains that the dream may have yet another meaning. Strictly speaking, then, it is impossible to determine the amount of condensation.

There is an answer, which at first sight seems most plausible, to the argument that the great lack of proportion between the dream-content and the dream-thoughts implies that the psychical material has undergone an extensive process of condensation in the course of the formation of the dream. We very often have an impression that we have dreamt a great deal all through the night and have since forgotten most of what we dreamt. On this view, the dream which we remember when we wake up would only be a fragmentary remnant of the total dream-work; and this, if we could recollect it in its entirety, might well be as extensive as the dream-thoughts. There is undoubtedly some truth in this: there can be no question that dreams can be reproduced most accurately if we try to recall them as soon as we wake up and that our memory of them becomes more and more incomplete toward evening. But on the other hand it can be shown that the impression that we have dreamt a great deal more than we can reproduce is very often based on an illusion, the origin of which I shall discuss later. Moreover the hypothesis that condensation occurs during the dream-work is not affected by the possibility of dreams

being forgotten, since this hypothesis is proved to be correct by the quantities of ideas which are related to each individual piece of the dream which has been retained. Even supposing that a large piece of the dream has escaped recollection, this may merely have prevented our having access to another group of dream-thoughts. There is no justification for supposing that the lost pieces of the dream would have related to the same thoughts which we have already reached from the pieces of the dream that have survived.[1]

In view of the very great number of associations produced in analysis to each individual element of the content of a dream, some readers may be led to doubt whether, as a matter of principle, we are justified in regarding as part of the dream-thoughts all the associations that occur to us during the subsequent analysis—whether we are justified, that is, in supposing that all these thoughts were already active during the state of sleep and played a part in the formation of the dream. Is it not more probable that new trains of thought have arisen in the course of the analysis which had no share in forming the dream? I can only give limited assent to this argument. It is no doubt true that some trains of thought arise for the first time during the analysis. But one can convince oneself in all such cases that these new connections are only set up between thoughts which were already linked in some other way in the dream-thoughts. The new connections are, as it were, loop-lines or short-circuits, made possible by the existence of other and deeper-lying connecting paths. It must be allowed that the great bulk of the thoughts which are revealed in analysis were already active during the process of forming the dream; for, after working through a string of thoughts which seem to have no connection with the formation of a dream, one suddenly comes upon one which is represented in its content and is indispensable for its interpretation, but which could not have been reached except by this particular line of approach. I may here recall the dream of the botanical monograph, which strikes one as the product of an astonishing amount of condensation, even though I have not reported its analysis in full.

How, then, are we to picture psychical conditions during the period of sleep which precedes dreams? Are all the dream-thoughts present alongside one another? or do they occur in sequence? or do a number of trains of thought start out simultaneously from different centers and afterward unite? There is no need for the present, in my opinion, to form any plastic idea of psychical conditions during the formation of dreams. It must not be forgotten, however, that we are dealing with an *unconscious* process of thought, which may easily be different from what we perceive during purposive reflection accompanied by consciousness.

The unquestionable fact remains, however, that the formation of dreams is based on a process of condensation. How is that condensation brought about?

When we reflect that only a small minority of all the dream-thoughts revealed are represented in the dream by one of their ideational elements, we might conclude that condensation is brought about by *omission:* that is, that the dream is not a faithful translation or a point-for-point projection of the dream-thoughts, but a highly incomplete and fragmentary version of them.

This view, as we shall soon discover, is a most inadequate one. But we may take it as a provisional starting-point and go on to a further question. If only a few elements from the dream-thoughts find their way into the dream-content, what are the conditions which determine their selection?

In order to get some light on this question we must turn our attention to those elements of the dream-content which must have fulfilled these conditions. And the most favorable material for such an investigation will be a dream to the construction of which a particularly intense process of condensation has contributed. I shall accordingly begin by choosing for the purpose the dream which I have already recorded.

The Dream of the Botanical Monograph

Content of the Dream.—*I had written a monograph on an (unspecified) genus of plants. The book lay before me and I was at the moment turning over a folded colored plate. Bound up in the copy there was a dried specimen of the plant.*

The element in this dream which stood out most was the *botanical monograph.* This arose from the impressions of the dream-day: I had in fact seen a monograph on the genus Cyclamen in the window of a book-shop. There was no mention of this genus in the content of the dream; all that was left in it was the monograph and its relation to botany. The "botanical monograph" immediately revealed its connection with the *work upon cocaine* which I had once written. From "cocaine" the chains of thought led on the one hand to the *Festschrift* and to certain events in a University laboratory, and on the other hand to my friend Dr. Königstein, the eye surgeon, who had had a share in the introduction of cocaine. The figure of Dr. Königstein further reminded me of the interrupted conversation which I had had with him the evening before and of my various reflections upon the payment for medical services among colleagues. This conversation was the actual currently active instigator of the dream; the monograph on the cyclamen was also a currently active impression, but one of an indifferent nature. As I perceived, the "botanical monograph" in the dream turned out to be an "intermediate common entity" between the two experiences of the previous day: it was taken over unaltered from the indifferent impression and was linked with the psychically significant event by copious associative connections.

Not only the compound idea, "botanical monograph," however, but each of its components, "botanical" and "monograph" separately, led by numerous connecting paths deeper and deeper into the tangle of dream-thoughts. "Botanical" was related to the figure of Professor *Gärtner* [Gardener], the *blooming* looks of his wife, to my patient *Flora* and to the lady [Frau L.] of whom I had told the story of the forgotten *flowers.* Gärtner led in turn to the laboratory and to my conversation with Königstein. My two patients [Flora and Frau L.] had been mentioned in the course of this conversation. A train of thought joined the lady with the flowers to my wife's *favorite flowers* and thence to the title of the monograph which I had seen for a moment during the day. In addition to these, "botanical" recalled an episode at my secondary school and an examination while I was at the University. A fresh topic touched upon

in my conversation with Dr. Königstein—my *favorite* hobbies—was joined, through the intermediate link of what I jokingly called my *favorite flower,* the artichoke, with the train of thought proceeding from the forgotten flowers. Behind "artichokes" lay, on the one hand, my thoughts about Italy[2] and, on the other hand, a scene from my childhood which was the opening of what have since become my intimate relations with books. Thus "botanical" was a regular nodal point in the dream. Numerous trains of thought converged upon it, which, as I can guarantee, had appropriately entered into the context of the conversation with Dr. Königstein. Here we find ourselves in a factory of thoughts where, as in the "weaver's masterpiece,"—

> Ein Tritt tausend Fäden regt,
> Die Schifflein herüber hinüber schiessen,
> Die Fäden ungesehen fliessen,
> Ein Schlag tausend Verbindungen schlägt.[3]

So, too, "monograph" in the dream touches upon two subjects: the one-sidedness of my studies and the costliness of my favorite hobbies.

This first investigation leads us to conclude that the elements "botanical" and "monograph" found their way into the content of the dream because they possessed copious contacts with the majority of the dream-thoughts, because, that is to say, they constituted "nodal points" upon which a great number of the dream-thoughts converged, and because they had several meanings in connection with the interpretation of the dream. The explanation of this fundamental fact can also be put in another way: each of the elements of the dream's content turns out to have been "overdetermined"—to have been represented in the dream-thoughts many times over.

We discover still more when we come to examine the remaining constituents of the dream in relation to their appearance in the dream-thoughts. The *colored plate* which I was unfolding led . . . to a new topic, my colleagues' criticisms of my activities, and to one which was already represented in the dream, my favorite hobbies; and it led, in addition, to the childhood memory in which I was pulling to pieces a book with colored plates. The *dried specimen of the plant* touched upon the episode of the herbarium at my secondary school and specially stressed that memory.

The nature of the relation between dream-content and dream-thoughts thus becomes visible. Not only are the elements of a dream determined by the dream-thoughts many times over, but the individual dream-thoughts are represented in the dream by several elements. Associative paths lead from one element of the dream to several dream-thoughts, and from one dream-thought to several elements of the dream. Thus a dream is not constructed by each individual dream-thought, or group of dream-thoughts, finding (in abbreviated form) separate representation in the content of the dream—in the kind of way in which an electorate chooses parliamentary representatives; a dream is constructed, rather, by the whole mass of dream-thoughts being submitted to a sort of manipulative process in which those elements which have the most numerous and strongest supports acquire the right of entry into the dream-content—in a manner analogous to election by *scrutin de liste.* In the

case of every dream which I have submitted to an analysis of this kind I have invariably found these same fundamental principles confirmed: the elements of the dream are constructed out of the whole mass of dream-thoughts and each one of those elements is shown to have been determined many times over in relation to the dream-thoughts.

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The Work of Displacement

In making our collection of instances of condensation in dreams, the existence of another relation, probably of no less importance, had already become evident. It could be seen that the elements which stand out as the principal components of the manifest content of the dream are far from playing the same part in the dream-thoughts. And, as a corollary, the converse of this assertion can be affirmed: what is clearly the essence of the dream-thoughts need not be represented in the dream at all. The dream is, as it were, differently centered from the dream-thoughts—its content has different elements as its central point. Thus in the dream of the botanical monograph, for instance, the central point of the dream-content was obviously the element "botanical"; whereas the dream-thoughts were concerned with the complications and conflicts arising between colleagues from their professional obligations, and further with the charge that I was in the habit of sacrificing too much for the sake of my hobbies. The element "botanical" had no place whatever in this core of the dream-thoughts, unless it was loosely connected with it by an antithesis—the fact that botany never had a place among my favorite studies. In my patient's *Sappho* dream the central position was occupied by climbing up and down and being up above and down below; the dream-thoughts, however, dealt with the dangers of sexual relations with people of an inferior social class. So that only a single element of the dream-thoughts seems to have found its way into the dream-content, though that element was expanded to a disproportionate extent. Similarly, in the dream of the may-beetles, the topic of which was the relations of sexuality to cruelty, it is true that the factor of cruelty emerged in the dream-content; but it did so in another connection and without any mention of sexuality, that is to say, divorced from its context and consequently transformed into something extraneous. Once again, in my dream about my uncle, the fair beard which formed its center-point seems to have had no connection in its meaning with my ambitious wishes which, as we saw, were the core of the dream-thoughts. Dreams such as these give a justifiable impression of "displacement." In complete contrast to these examples, we can see that in the dream of Irma's injection the different elements were able to retain, during the process of constructing the dream, the approximate place which they occupied in the dream-thoughts. This further relation between the dream-thoughts and the dream-content, wholly variable as it is in its sense or direction, is calculated at first to create astonishment. If we are considering a psychical process in normal life and find that one out of its several component ideas has been picked out and has acquired a special degree of vividness in consciousness, we usually regard this effect as evidence that a specially high

amount of psychical value—some particular degree of interest—attaches to this predominant idea. But we now discover that, in the case of the different elements of the dream-thoughts, a value of this kind does not persist or is disregarded in the process of dream-formation. There is never any doubt as to which of the elements of the dream-thoughts have the highest psychical value; we learn that by direct judgment. In the course of the formation of a dream these essential elements, charged, as they are, with intense interest, may be treated as though they were of small value, and their place may be taken in the dream by other elements, of whose small value in the dream-thoughts there can be no question. At first sight it looks as though no attention whatever is paid to the psychical intensity[4] of the various ideas in making the choice among them for the dream, and as though the only thing considered is the greater or less degree of multiplicity of their determination. What appears in dreams, we might suppose, is not what is *important* in the dream-thoughts but what occurs in them several times over. But this hypothesis does not greatly assist our understanding of dream-formation, since from the nature of things it seems clear that the two factors of multiple determination and inherent psychical value must necessarily operate in the same sense. The ideas which are most important among the dream-thoughts will almost certainly be those which occur most often in them, since the different dream-thoughts will, as it were, radiate out from them. Nevertheless a dream can reject elements which are thus both highly stressed in themselves and reinforced from many directions, and can select for its content other elements which possess only the second of these attributes.

In order to solve this difficulty we shall make use of another impression derived from our enquiry into the overdetermination of the dream-content. Perhaps some of those who have read that enquiry may already have formed an independent conclusion that the overdetermination of the elements of dreams is no very important discovery, since it is a self-evident one. For in analysis we start out from the dream-elements and note down all the associations which lead off from them; so that there is nothing surprising in the fact that in the thought-material arrived at in this way we come across these same elements with peculiar frequency. I cannot accept this objection; but I will myself put into words something that sounds not unlike it. Among the thoughts that analysis brings to light are many which are relatively remote from the kernel of the dream and which look like artificial interpolations made for some particular purpose. That purpose is easy to divine. It is precisely *they* that constitute a connection, often a forced and far-fetched one, between the dream-content and the dream-thoughts; and if these elements were weeded out of the analysis the result would often be that the component parts of the dream-content would be left not only without overdetermination but without any satisfactory determination at all. We shall be led to conclude that the multiple determination which decides what shall be included in a dream is not always a primary factor in dream-construction but is often the secondary product of a psychical force which is still unknown to us. Nevertheless multiple determination must be of importance in choosing what particular elements shall enter a dream, since we can see that a considerable expenditure of

effort is used to bring it about in cases where it does not arise from the dream-material unassisted.

It thus seems plausible to suppose that in the dream-work a psychical force is operating which on the one hand strips the elements which have a high psychical value of their intensity, and on the other hand, *by means of overdetermination,* creates from elements of low psychical value new values, which afterward find their way into the dream-content. If that is so, *a transference and displacement of psychical intensities* occurs in the process of dream-formation, and it is as a result of these that the difference between the text of the dream-content and that of the dream-thoughts comes about. The process which we are here presuming is nothing less than the essential portion of the dream-work; and it deserves to be described as "dream-displacement." Dream-displacement and dream-condensation are the two governing factors to whose activity we may in essence ascribe the form assumed by dreams.

Nor do I think we shall have any difficulty in recognizing the psychical force which manifests itself in the facts of dream-displacement. The consequence of the displacement is that the dream-content no longer resembles the core of the dream-thoughts and that the dream gives no more than a distortion of the dream-wish which exists in the unconscious. But we are already familiar with dream-distortion. We traced it back to the censorship which is exercised by one psychical agency in the mind over another. Dream-displacement is one of the chief methods by which that distortion is achieved. *Is fecit cui profuit.*[5] We may assume, then, that dream-displacement comes about through the influence of the same censorship—that is, the censorship of endopsychic defense.[6]

The question of the interplay of these factors—of displacement, condensation and overdetermination—in the construction of dreams, and the question which is a dominant factor and which a subordinate one—all of this we shall leave aside for later investigation. But we can state provisionally a second condition which must be satisfied by those elements of the dream-thoughts which make their way into the dream: *they must escape the censorship imposed by resistance.*[7] And henceforward in interpreting dreams we shall take dream-displacement into account as an undeniable fact.

Family Romances[8]

THE FREEING OF an individual, as he grows up, from the authority of his parents is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development. It is quite essential that that liberation should occur and it may be presumed that it has been to some extent achieved by everyone who has reached a normal state. Indeed, the whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations. On the other hand, there is a class of neurotics whose condition is recognizably determined by their having failed in this task.

For a small child his parents are at first the only authority and the source of all belief. The child's most intense and most momentous wish during these early years is to be like his parents (that is, the parent of his own sex) and to be big like his father and mother. But as intellectual growth increases, the child cannot help discovering by degrees the category to which his parents belong. He gets to know other parents and compares them with his own, and so comes to doubt the incomparable and unique quality which he has attributed to them. Small events in the child's life which make him feel dissatisfied afford him provocation for beginning to criticize his parents, and for using, in order to support his critical attitude, the knowledge which he has acquired that other parents are in some respects preferable to them. The psychology of the neuroses teaches us that, among other factors, the most intense impulses of sexual rivalry contribute to this result. A feeling of being slighted is obviously what constitutes the subject-matter of such provocations. There are only too many occasions on which a child is slighted, or at least *feels* he has been slighted, on which he feels he is not receiving the whole of his parents' love, and, most of all, on which he feels regrets at having to share it with brothers and sisters. His sense that his own affection is not being fully reciprocated then finds a vent in the idea, which is often consciously recollected from early childhood, of being a step-child or an adopted child. People who have not developed neuroses very frequently remember occasions of this kind on which—usually as a result of something they have read—they thus interpreted and responded to their parents' hostile behavior. But at this point the influence of sex is already in evidence, for a boy is far more inclined to feel hostile impulses toward his father than toward his mother and has a far more intense desire to get free from *him* than from *her.* In this respect the imagination of girls is apt to show itself much weaker. These consciously remembered mental impulses of childhood embody the factor which enables us to understand the nature of hero-myths.

The later stage in the development of the neurotic's estrangement from his parents, begun in this manner, might be described as "the neurotic's family romance." It is seldom remembered consciously but can almost always be revealed by psycho-analysis. For a quite specific form of imaginative activity is one of the essential characteristics of neurotics and also of all comparatively

highly gifted people. This activity emerges first in children's play, and then, starting roughly from the period before puberty, takes over the topic of family relations. A characteristic example of this particular kind of fantasy is to be seen in the familiar day-dreams[9] which persist far beyond puberty. If these day-dreams are carefully examined, they are found to serve as the fulfillment of wishes and as a correction of actual life. They have two principal aims, erotic and ambitious—though an erotic aim is usually concealed behind the latter too. At about the period I have mentioned, then, the child's imagination becomes engaged in the task of getting free from the parents of whom he now has such a low opinion and of replacing them by others, occupying, as a rule, a higher social station. He will make use in this connection of any opportune coincidences from his actual experience, such as his becoming acquainted with the Lord of the Manor or some landed proprietor if he lives in the country or with some member of the aristocracy if he lives in town. Chance occurrences of this kind arouse the child's envy, which finds expression in a fantasy in which both his parents are replaced by others of better birth. The technique used in carrying out fantasies like this (which are, of course, conscious at this period) depends upon the ingenuity and the material which the child has at his disposal. There is also the question of whether the fantasies are worked out with greater or less effort to obtain verisimilitude. This stage is reached at a time at which the child is still in ignorance of the sexual determinants of procreation.

When presently the child comes to know of the various kinds of sexual relations between fathers and mothers and realizes that "*pater semper incertus est,*" while the mother is "*certissima,*" the family romance undergoes a peculiar curtailment: it contents itself with exalting the child's father, but no longer casts any doubts on his maternal origin, which is regarded as something unalterable. This second (sexual) stage of the family romance is actuated by another motive as well, which is absent in the first (asexual) stage. The child, having learnt about sexual processes, tends to picture to himself erotic situations and relations, the motive force behind this being his desire to bring his mother (who is the subject of the most intense sexual curiosity) into situations of secret infidelity and into secret love-affairs. In this way the child's fantasies, which started by being, as it were, asexual, are brought up to the level of his later knowledge.

Moreover the motive of revenge and retaliation, which was in the background at the earlier stage, is also to be found at the later one. It is, as a rule, precisely these neurotic children who were punished by their parents for sexual naughtiness and who later revenge themselves on their parents by means of fantasies of this kind.

A younger child is very specially inclined to use imaginative stories such as these in order to rob those born before him of their prerogatives—in a way which reminds one of historical intrigues; and he often has no hesitation in attributing to his mother as many fictitious love-affairs as he himself has competitors. An interesting variant of the family romance may then appear, in which the hero and author returns to legitimacy himself while his brothers and sisters are got out of the way by being bastardized. So too if there are any

other particular interests at work they can direct the course to be taken by the family romance; for its many-sidedness and its great range of applicability enable it to meet every sort of requirement. In this way, for instance, the young fantasy-builder can get rid of his forbidden degree of kinship with one of his sisters if he finds himself sexually attracted by her.

If anyone is inclined to turn away in horror from this depravity of the childish heart or feels tempted, indeed, to dispute the possibility of such things, he should observe that these works of fiction, which seem so full of hostility, are none of them really so badly intended, and that they still preserve, under a slight disguise, the child's original affection for his parents. The faithlessness and ingratitude are only apparent. If we examine in detail the commonest of these imaginative romances, the replacement of both parents or of the father alone by grander people, we find that these new and aristocratic parents are equipped with attributes that are derived entirely from real recollections of the actual and humble ones; so that in fact the child is not getting rid of his father but exalting him. Indeed the whole effort at replacing the real father by a superior one is only an expression of the child's longing for the happy, vanished days when his father seemed to him the noblest and strongest of men and his mother the dearest and loveliest of women. He is turning away from the father whom he knows today to the father in whom he believed in the earlier years of his childhood; and his fantasy is no more than the expression of a regret that those happy days have gone. Thus in these fantasies the over-valuation that characterizes a child's earliest years comes into its own again. An interesting contribution to this subject is afforded by the study of dreams. We learn from their interpretation that even in later years, if the Emperor and Empress appear in dreams, those exalted personages stand for the dreamer's father and mother.[10] So that the child's over-valuation of his parents also survives in the dreams of normal adults.

Notes

1. [*Footnote added* 1914:] The occurrence of condensation in dreams has been hinted at by many writers. Du Prel (1885, 85) has a passage in which he says it is absolutely certain that there has been a process of condensation of the groups of ideas in dreams. (Bracketed notes are by the translator. M. McK.)

2. [This seems to be a reference to an element in the dream-thoughts not previously mentioned.]

3.

[. . . a thousand threads one treadle throws,
Where fly the shuttles hither and thither,
Unseen the threads are knit together,
And an infinite combination grows.
Goethe, *Faust,* Part I, Scene 4
(Bayard Taylor's translation)]

4. *Psychical* intensity or value or the degree of interest of an idea is of course to be distinguished from *sensory* intensity or the intensity of the image presented.

5. [The old legal tag: "He did the deed who gained by it."]

6. [*Footnote added* 1909:] Since I may say that the kernel of my theory of dreams

lies in my derivation of dream-distortion from the censorship, I will here insert the last part of a story from *Phantasien eines Realisten* [*Phantasies of a Realist*] by "Lynkeus" (Vienna, 2nd edition, 1900 [1st edition, 1899]), in which I have found this principal feature of my theory once more expounded. The title of the story is "Träumen wie Wachen" ["Dreaming like Waking"]:

> "About a man who has the remarkable attribute of never dreaming non-sense . . ."
>
> "This splendid gift of yours, for dreaming as though you were waking, is a consequence of your virtues, of your kindness, your sense of justice, and your love of truth; it is the moral serenity of your nature which makes me understand all about you."
>
> "But when I think the matter over properly," replied the other, "I almost believe that everyone is made like me, and that no one at all ever dreams nonsense. Any dream which one can remember clearly enough to describe it afterwards—any dream, that is to say, which is not a fever-dream—must *always* make sense, and it cannot possibly be otherwise. For things that were mutually contradictory could not group themselves into a single whole. The fact that time and space are often thrown into confusion does not affect the true content of the dream, since no doubt neither of them are of significance for its real essence. We often do the same thing in waking life. Only think of fairy tales and of the many daring products of the imagination, which are full of meaning and of which only a man without intelligence could say: 'This is nonsense, for it's impossible.'"
>
> "If only one always knew how to interpret dreams in the right way, as you have just done with mine!" said his friend.
>
> "That is certainly no easy task; but with a little attention on the part of the dreamer himself it should no doubt always succeed.—You ask why it is that for the most part it does *not* succeed? In you other people there seems always to be something that lies concealed in your dreams, something unchaste in a special and higher sense, a certain secret quality in your being which it is hard to follow. And that is why your dreams so often seem to be without meaning or even to be non-sense. But in the deepest sense this is not in the least so; indeed, it cannot be so at all—for it is always the same man, whether he is awake or dreaming."

7. [The first condition being that they must be overdetermined.]

8. [Otto Rank's book *Der Mythus von der Geburt des Helden* (1909) included this note by Freud, which was reprinted under the title of "Der Familienroman der Neurotiker," *Gesammelte Schriften* (Leipzig, 1925), 12:367, and *Gesammelte Werke* (London, 1942), 7:227. Rank's book appeared in English as *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1914). Present translation by James Strachey.]

9. Cf. "Hysterical Phantasies and their Relation to Bisexuality" (1908), *Collected Papers,* ed. Joan Riviere and James Strachey (London, 1924), 2:51, where a reference will be found to the literature of the subject.

10. Cf. my *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900).

10

Marthe Robert

From Origins of the Novel

. . . and while they contain so much apparent truth, since they tell us about father, mother, relations . . .

Don Quixote

"Like all men, you are the offspring of the novel," such is my obsession and my defeat . . .

E. M. Cioran

Abandoning the field of theory—none too reliable in this case—for the world of romantic desire we must now explore, let us consider another kind of imagination, the non-literary imagination which, in the purely psychic sphere it normally inhabits, has all the ingredients of an unformulated novel, of an incipient fiction. Since Freud—whose discovery of it was based on his patients' day-dreams, or on what might be called their personal folklore—we are aware of a certain type of elementary story-telling, half-way between literature and psychology, conscious in childhood, unconscious in adult life, but compulsive in many forms of neurosis, whose quasi-universal significance cannot be ignored in view of its remarkable prevalence and the consistency of its content. Elementary yet compulsive, and lending itself both structurally and thematically to the expression of all sorts of conflicting intentions that only an adequate analysis can unravel, this "pattern" of a story may vary greatly from case to case and pass through different stages of development, while its setting, characters and subject matter remain constant. Its affective complexion and the obscure desires which force it into hiding have a permanence which suggests that such monotony may correspond to some basic need or even to the essence of imagination as such.

Freud, drawing on his unique clinical experience, describes it as a sort of day-dream which, at some time or other, sank into the depths of the psyche to become a forgotten fragment of our archeology, part of that residue which we can safely ignore without ever realizing how much we owe to it. Thus it is something which primarily concerns psychology; yet simultaneously it is a chunk of unvoiced literature, an unwritten text, soundless and entirely unwitnessed, but possessing all the intensity and significance of a genuine creation. The dual psychological and literary character of this rediscovered myth, the originality of its structure, the peculiarity of its content and the pathological

nature of its revival could not have been more aptly epitomized than in Freud's now classical definition: "the family romance of the neurotic."[1]

From Freud we learn that in early childhood we all consciously fabricate this fabulous, wholly mendacious and fantastic tale, but that we forget or "repress" it as soon as the requirements of our development make it impossible for us to take it seriously. Small wonder then that we had to wait for the psychoanalyst to extract it from oblivion; unknown by normal adults, and thus without significance or status in everyday life, only the peculiar circumstances of analytical treatment will enable it to surface with any consistency, as a set of more or less well preserved remnants which, when completed and assembled by means of adequate analysis, finally falls into place as a coherent whole. Though conscious and normal at its incipience in early childhood, it is unconscious and pathological during the remainder of our lives; and although it may indeed subsist as no more than a symptomatic archaism in the adult psyche, it is more than merely the manifestation of an outgrown stage of our development or its pathological survival; for it may be said to possess a kind of undying universality, since each child re-invents it in the privacy of his dreams as if it were always new.

The child does not invent his Family Romance simply as a game for the sake of inventing—though game and invention are certainly not foreign to his motives—but, as Freud says, to overcome the first disappointment whereby his parental idyll is in danger of foundering. The young child continues to see his parents as tutelary deities for a long time; they dispense their loving care and he, in exchange, invests them not only with absolute power, but with an inexhaustible store of love and an infallibility that sets them apart from and above the rest of humanity. For the puny creature threatened by danger on all sides, such idealization is not without considerable advantages; indeed, it provides precisely what he senses that, in his precarious state, he most lacks: first a token of security (all-powerful protectors are obviously more effective than the unarmed); then, a respectable excuse for his own weakness (no cause for shame in feeling small before perfection itself!); and furthermore, a means of reversing the whole situation, since the offspring of divine parents can only be an infant god. Thus the apologist is the first beneficiary of his idols' presumed virtues: the love he bestows is reciprocated, he basks in the reflected light of his parents' glory and the magnifying mirror of his admiration reflects his own image suitably enlarged. Since infantile narcissism, basic to such parental glorification, amplifies and immortalizes all that with which the young child can identify, his hyperbolic world naturally tends toward permanence. Life, however, decrees otherwise; as the child grows up and ceases to be the object of unremitting attention, he imagines that his parents love him less; and thus—especially when he has to share their affection with a newcomer or two—he cannot help feeling deprived, swindled or even betrayed. Not only has he ceased to be the one beloved infant monarch or god entitled to unmitigated, undivided attention; he further begins to suspect that his mother and father are not the only parents in the world: a foretaste of social experience has shown him that there are others, a great many others, some of whom may be superior to his own, wittier, kindlier, wealthier or more distinguished. The

blind veneration that once epitomized all his assessments is a thing of the past; spurred on by his disappointment and humiliation, he now observes, compares, evaluates or, in other words, substitutes scrutiny for faith and temporal reality for eternity. Obviously such an inevitable transition is not without jolts as the child is torn between the dictates of awakening intelligence and his attachment to the outgrown beliefs to which he desperately clings in dread of what the consequences of their relinquishment might be. Obliged to go forward or forgo the benefits of development, yet unable to give up the paradise in whose eternity he still trusts against all odds, he can avoid disaster only by taking refuge in a more amenable imaginary world. That is why he starts to tell himself stories; or rather *a* story which, in fact, is a tendentious version of his life, a biographical fantasy expressly conceived to account for the unaccountable disgrace of being un-aristocratic, unlucky and unloved; and in which, furthermore, he can indulge in self-pity, self-comfort and revenge through a single act of his imagination where veneration and rejection vie for primacy.

To make up the plot of his Family Romance, the child does not have to resort to over-complex inventions; he only needs to find an external cause for the inner transformation whose motives elude him: his parents, unrecognizable since he has discovered that they are human, are so different he cannot accept them as his own and thence assumes that they are not his true parents but literally strangers, people with whom he has nothing in common except that they have given him a home and brought him up. Once the estrangement he now feels for his idols has been accounted for in this way, he can henceforth think of himself as a Foundling, an adopted child to whom his true parents—Royal, needless to say, or at least noble and influential—will eventually reveal themselves and restore him to his rightful status. Formerly he had felt neglected, wronged, unfairly treated by fate and afflicted with unworthy parents; and he was right, since he has indeed been abandoned and his unknown parents are unable to bestow their love and their wealth upon him. The fantasy makes it clear at one go: it makes every form of retaliation permissible and explains his rejection of former idols (the imaginary sins of his imaginary noble parents are visited on his real parents whose redoubled lowliness accounts for their unworthiness). Meanwhile the subtle displacement that results simultaneously in accusations and false excuses—the parents are guilty of seeming to be what they are not, but it is not they, in fact, who are implicated, since their failings have been ascribed to strangers[2]—enables the child to resolve, at least in his imagination the otherwise insoluble problem of growing up while still remaining a child. For although he rejects his parents to signify his desire to become independent, and thus dispense with the irrational faith of his past, on the other hand he closes the gap which separated him from them, since his imaginary parents are exact replicas of his old idols; so that while taking a first tentative step toward independence and self reliance, he nonetheless succeeds in prolonging, however briefly, the parental idyll he knows will eventually come to an end.

The first stage of the Family Romance ends in this purely narcissistic conflict which the child, conditioned by the psychic experiences proper to his

age, neither wishes nor is able to resolve.[3] Alone between the apparently antithetical couples toward whom he feels the same veneration and the same resentment, he is immune to love and to its inherent conflicts; indeed, he would be at peace were it not for the concessions he has to make to his pride, and if he suffers it is as it were, regally and without prejudice to his vanity. Within a space restricted to himself and therefore limitless—"mine" and "yours" are barely distinguishable; others and the self constantly exchange possessions; accuser and accused are one; so that vengeance inevitably strikes the avenger, rebellion and dissent fall back on the rebel. And here the tale inevitably reaches the last stages of its evolution: for want of individualized characters sufficiently distinct and distanced from each other to agree or disagree, it deals only with a vague desire for freedom, with attempted evasions that are no more than differed regressions.

In fact the Romance will not reach a more lively stage until sexuality appears on the scene, together with notions of *otherness* which alone make agreement, conflict, union or separation properly intelligible. So long as the child considers his mother and father as undifferentiated beings, there is no reason why he should not love or hate them both, without any thought for the fundamental distinction which presides over their union and has always unwittingly dictated his preferences; but as soon as he becomes acquainted with the facts of life (and, since he is still entirely self-centered, he is only really interested in finding out how he himself was born), he cannot fail to imagine the major and most disturbing consequence of this discovery: that his two parents have two distinct functions in the story of his birth. Moreover their official respective titles do not correspond to the truth in an equal degree of certitude, the one being invariably undisputed and the other dubious and practically unverifiable. Now if it is true that genealogical insecurity always depends on paternity; the dual rejection which enabled the child to invent his own genealogy is henceforth inadequate; the story can no longer be based on it without becoming anachronistic and thus less credible—and, contrary to its purpose, regressive. The answer consists in accepting the mother, while excluding her from the fantasy, and promoting the father to the required rank. Once the child has decided to keep his real mother with all her familiar features and humdrum circumstances, he will concentrate his efforts on his father whose uncertain status has been revealed to him (uncertainty promptly changing to another certainty). Thus, with an ordinary mother and an imaginary, noble father ever more distant as he rises in rank, the child assumes an illegitimacy that opens, for his pseudo-biography, new vistas with untold consequences. In this way the parental couple's indissoluble union is firmly refuted; each parent is available to other partners and utterly independent; the mother, excluded from the fantasy, re-integrates reality while the father emerges from it, so that the two figures no longer inhabit the same universe; they pertain to two distinct categories, one feminine, familiar and insignificant; the other masculine, remote and noble; but each divided in two by a constant conflict of emotions and ideas. The Romance as such begins with this opposition which involves—insofar as it is based on sexual differentiation and all the antitheses and distinctions it symbolizes—infinite possibilities for adventure, intrigue

and conflict; in other words for all manner of activity which will enable it to achieve its ends without in any way departing from its ambiguity.

The Romance's new, sexual preoccupations are apparent even in its efforts to disguise them. Indeed, by placing him in the position he obviously aspires to, the child's asserted illegitimacy reveals his true motives and the orientation of his sexual desires. For he thus keeps his mother beside him, and such a proximity encourages a relationship which, being henceforth the only concrete one in the story, grows increasingly intimate; and furthermore—though the two operations are so intricately linked that it is hard to dissociate them—he relegates his father to an imaginary kingdom beyond and above the family circle—a form of tribute, maybe, but in fact an exile, since this royal, unknown father who is forever absent might just as well not exist for all the part he plays in everyday life: he is a phantom, a corpse, who may be the object of a cult, but whose vacant place cries out nonetheless to be filled. If we consider that the unconscious stage-manager directing the play sees every relationship as a sexual relationship, every absence as a murder (the unconscious ignores death and can only conceive it as an extended absence), we must realize that the parents' *social* disparity is more than a symbol for the assessment of values which seems to motivate it—in fact it stands for a shocking emotional predicament, for that indeed is the Romance's purpose to relate without revealing, and simultaneously to resolve. What is here represented in the form of unequal circumstances obviously refers to the most painful childhood ordeal, to that inner conflict Freud associated with the legendary figure of Oedipus[4] in order to stress the inevitability for all men wherever they are born of the dual disaster which befell the Theban king. To kill his father and possess the mother he covets in the face of formidable interdictions may not be the clearly stated intention of the youthful Oedipus of our Romance; but his evasiveness amounts to a confession, and though he expresses himself by euphemism and allusion, his roundabout path unfailingly leads to the truth. Thus he does not kill his father, he only excludes him from the family circle; but by treating himself to a remote, kingly parent whose virtues moreover cast a flattering glow on himself, his mother becomes conveniently unattached and he is entitled to interfere with her love life, supervise her feelings, change her children's civil status. Such unadulterated intimacy constitutes a substitute for the possession he craves, and has the further advantage of evading the dreaded punishment such possession entails (castration, according to Freud, or its attenuated symbol, blindness). Within the family triangle whose emotional space he has organized, he alludes to what he has to renounce, reveals the goals he must avoid, skirts the danger toward which his forbidden passion unerringly draws him, in fact, manipulates Oedipus' tragic fate with such dexterity that he is able to savor transgression without ever actually succumbing to it.[5] Such a remarkable sleight of hand alone would suffice to account for the Family Romance's success and the fact that it should be publicly acknowledged even when its epithet has been forgotten: for it provides, if not a solution, at least the simplest, most ingenious and most inspired palliative for that typical childhood conflict, that crisis which is, above all determinating factors, the distinctive sign of humanity.

It would seem that the Oepidus theme might create a schism between love and hate; that they would cease to merge as they had done in the earlier stages of the fantasy when the storyteller's ignorance impelled them to do so. The Foundling only perceived his parents in a general projection or identification which abolished their separateness; hence the ambiguity of his emotions and the incapacitating lack of conflict. The illegitimate child, on the other hand, is better off in that he knows whom he loves and whom he hates, together with the reasons for his preferences; moreover while torn asunder in this critical situation, he nonetheless shows unequivocally how he would like to settle the conflict. But in fact the situation is far from simple for him; he cannot really by-pass ambiguities—indeed, he becomes entangled in them through the intervention of a further distinction, this time between love and admiration, or between sexual desires and moral aspirations; or again, and to sum up the antithesis in an accepted formula, between what the heart desires and the mind dictates. The parents' unequal circumstances, invented to satisfy Oedipal requirements, is thus a piece of irrefutable evidence, since it exposes almost indecently the schism between love and ideal which increases the child's torment; though, admittedly, it assists him in his difficult apprenticeship. For his mother's lowly status is the price he has to pay for her intimacy—his love demeans her, while the loathed father inhabits the ideal regions befitting his rank. Debarred from her former royalty, she now occupies a humble social position; moreover, in addition to her mediocrity and servility she is branded with immorality, since the fantasy of his illegitimacy necessarily presupposes her adultery. Morally condemned for the very incident that caused her social downfall, the mother will now be guilty of as many love affairs as she has children, or as the storyteller is able to invent; thus, deprived simultaneously of her throne and her virtue, she is reduced to the status of servant, fallen woman or even prostitute (psychoanalysis has no difficulty in demonstrating how such hierarchically conflicting images are intimately related in the unconscious and can further prove the point by referring to the large section of romantic literature entirely based on such confusions). The child is now cruelly torn: having associated sexuality with "the Fall"—like every theologian—he is forced to despise his beloved, precisely for what makes her attractive (indeed, the mother *falls* as soon as she becomes desirable) while he admires, emulates, equals or if possible surpasses the object of his hatred whom he aspires to kill. Such an ambiguous situation is obviously fraught with insoluble complications. But although, when not properly resolved, the consequences may be very serious, the Romance does nothing to overcome it, but tends rather to magnify it, boasting and advertising it in every possible way, perhaps because it knows that it constitutes the only realistic vindication of the revised biography it has to establish (while believing in it in order to be consistent with its new realism). For if the mother were blameless the chance of amending reality, which is the Romance's whole purpose, would collapse; on the other hand if she is guilty and debased the child can eliminate all the humiliating, undesirable factors from his biography—an unimpressive father, a hopelessly restricted existence and brothers and sisters whose presence is a continual reminder of the intolerable fact that love must be shared. Thus his

mother's fall is the *sine qua non* of his ascent, and he does not hesitate to turn it to account by claiming illegitimacy as an exclusive privilege that raises him above his siblings and gives him a certain glamor; or else by making his brothers and sisters illegitimate, which provides him with another form of distinction while simultaneously ridding him of his more importunate rivals. But whichever way the providential adultery is interpreted, the blemish in his civil status is the focal point of his Romance, the one on which he relies to create an imaginary realm which will satisfy his ambition and where he can reign with a certain amount of justification as lord and master of his own fate.

Thus the illegitimate hero "makes" a novel in the social climber's sense of the term: he "makes it" through women, or more precisely through the one woman who epitomizes the charm of all, together too with their characteristic weakness and untrustworthiness ("the eternal feminine" and misogny here reassert their old alliance). However such purely social success cannot satisfy his appetite for power, though it continues to be his main preoccupation. Through status he aims at total creativity; and this he achieves by the simplest of imaginary feats, the appropriation of what, to him, is the sum of all creative powers, his father's virility. The Foundling's *miraculous* birth could never serve such a purpose; but from the moment it has been transformed into the *shameful* yet *glamorous* birth of an illegitimate child—shame and glamor are here synonymous, one corroborates the other[6]—he intervenes personally in the intimate process of conception; and it is he who displaces blood-relationships, creates kinships, "competes with the registry office," in short, takes an active part in the mysterious furtherance of life itself—like his father, he peoples the world, or rather, like God, since he ignores material limitations.[7] Having robbed the father-spouse of the doubly desirable woman—she is desirable as sexual partner and as a means to worldly success—he proceeds to rob the father-god of his phallic power—the supreme creativity which alone will enable him to surpass his idol.[8] Degraded, dispossessed, castrated, negated by every means imaginable, the father is then imitated in his most representative and most envied role. But imitation is always an act of devotion, proof of an unshakable, indestructible piety; so the model is inevitably reborn and reinstated as rival. The imitator, bewitched by the spell of his childish cult, can never free himself—the Romance that was to have been final is never more than an impossible leave-taking he can only hope to prolong.[9]

The Bastard has never done with killing his father in order to take his place, imitate him or surpass him by "going his own way." Guilty by nature, not by accident, he has no choice but to draw the Romance, condemned by the source of its inspiration, into a cycle of transgressions where, humiliated by the limitations of his being, guilty, ashamed and obsessed with expiation and punishment, he heaps coals on his bad conscience and rebellion.[10] Murder, revolt and usurpation, invariably justified in the plot, are what motivate the Romance even when it is ostentatiously moralistic.[11] Thus the Oedipus complex that encourages dissimulation, intrigue and scheming, will find the means to pass such transgressions off as amusing and trivial, tone down crime and reduce impiety to small-town gossip, disaster to a conjugal mishap or minor scandal. But however protean its subject-matter and methods, the devil him-

self is responsible for its murkiness and the peculiar talent for bringing situations to a head—from the somber machinations of melodrama and the equivocations of comedy to spiritual or historical tragedies apparently unrelated to its infantile origins. For it is a fact—and one the critic rightly stresses—that the novel can do whatever it pleases, because the pattern on which it is modeled lends it credibility, while leaving it a free choice of key, modality and compass; it can be somber or gay, insipid or spicy, cynical, profound, innocent or superficial; when it raises transgression to the height of tragedy it will be heroic; sublime when it concentrates on the quest for the absolute implicit in its concern for origins; realistic when it produces a convincing image of the world—cities, countries, epochs—its characters inhabit; fantastic when it restricts itself to its original narcissistic excesses; learned, philosophical, rational—it may be all these in turn or together, and it is equally entitled to maintain the narrative at the lowest level of adultery, rape, illegitimacy and criminal or political plots; to be naïve and to exalt the noble princes, avenging Bastards or dishonored damsels who make it "popular"; or even to reduce Oedipus' two terrible crimes to vulgar Oedipal tittle-tattle. During the whole of its history the novel has derived the violence of its desires and its irrepressible freedom from the Family Romance; in this respect it can be said that this primal romance reveals, beneath the historical and individual accidents from which each particular work derives, more than simply the psychological origins of the genre; it is the genre, with all its inexhaustible possibilities and congenital childishness, the false, frivolous, grandiose, mean, subversive and gossipy genre of which each of us is indeed the issue (to his shame, say the philosophers; to his delight, says the novelist, speaking for himself and for his readers) and which, moreover, recreates for each of us a remnant of our primal love and primal reality.

Since the Oedipus complex is a universal human phenomenon, all fiction, invention and image making expresses it more or less explicitly.[12] In this respect the novel is only one "Oedipal" form among many others, its one distinction—and for literature such a distinction is highly significant—being that instead of reproducing a crude fancy according to rules established by a specific artistic code, it is modeled on *a pre-romanticized fancy,* the outline of a plot which is not only the inexhaustible source of subsequent plots, but the one convention to which it is willing to submit. Whereas tragedy, drama, comedy, opera or farce set the eternal triangle that dominates all their themes in an arbitrarily determined time and space, revealing what they are playing at—or the *rules* of the game they have undertaken to observe—the novel receives from literature as such no hard and fast directions or interdictions; be it popular or highbrow, old or new, classical or modern, its only rules are derived from the family setting whose unconscious desires it perpetuates; so that while its psychic content and motivations are completely pre-determined, it is totally free to choose one or more of the various structures and styles at its disposal; whereas in every other case, genre determines the aesthetic modalities of transposition, here it yields its prerogatives to pure fiction, which has, as it were, a *compulsory content* and an *optional form,* admitting of as many variations

as the imagination can invent. The genre's ambiguity consists entirely in this peculiar characteristic that radically distinguishes it from all codified forms of art; its only obligation is to the imagination whose program it carries out and it has, literally, no further limitations than those of the absolute monarchy wherein it parades its delusions.

Thus the childhood Family Romance determines the novel's lack of generic features—its notorious inconsistency—and more specifically, the endeavor to be realistic which, oddly enough, it considers a proof of its reality. Unlike all other representational genres the novel is never content to *represent* but aims rather at giving a "complete and genuine" account of everything, as if, owing to some special dispensation or magic power, it had an unmediated contact with reality. Thus its characters are presented as real people, its words as actual time and its images as the very essence of events; which is not only inconsistent with a healthy conception of art—where *representation* makes itself conspicuous within an agreed time and space (sets and props for the theater, verse for poetry, frames for paintings, etc.)—but even with that incitement to dream and evasion which, on the other hand, the novel claims as its prerogative. On the surface such naïve inconsistency—or bad faith, as it has sometimes been called[13]—is totally inexplicable; it only becomes comprehensible in relation to the original story's paradox, which has sufficient communicative power to be convincing.[14] The novel wants to be believed just like the story the child used to invent to compensate for life's disappointments. And there, in fact, is the paradox: for the child only invents because his first contact with reality was a disappointment; without disillusion there would be no cause for dreams; but neither would there be any cause for disappointment and evasion if reality had not begun to obtrude. Unless he decides to regress by telling himself stories he himself finds hard to believe, he will never be sufficiently engrossed in his dreams to ignore the effects of his ever-increasing experience upon the dreams themselves; and however much he may wish to cut himself off from a disappointing universe, he cannot help simultaneously trying to understand and dominate it, especially since that is the only way in which he can hope to regain at least a certain degree of a control he believes he is being denied. For his reality has, in fact, two aspects: one frustrating and in need of suppression; the other full of potential triumphs that must, at all cost, be taken into consideration. Thus the child can only succeed in his private task of sentimental and social education if, fully aware of this duality, he is able to establish a skillful compromise between these antagonistic tendencies. He will have to install experience at the heart of his dreams, since there is no point in ignoring it if he wants to change reality; indeed, it behooves him to adapt his inventions to circumstances, utopia to temporality, and dream to experience, or, in Freudian terms, subject the "pleasure principle" to the "reality principle"—which doubtless will not make the story come true, but will increase its claims to veracity and even make it that much more credible. This dialectic of "invention" and "reality," such as it is apprehended by the youthful dreamer torn between conflicting temptations, is what the novel inherits long before it is transcribed; whence the peculiar philosophy on behalf of which the whole genre claims to combine by magic the visible and the invisible, dream and reality,

evasion and re-integration, myth and science, time lost and time regained. A philosophy of this kind has obviously no validity as such, since there is no possible link between interior and exterior events, but only between the reality of "inventions" and the illusion of "reality"; that is, between explicit invention and unacknowledged invention (deception being commensurate with the art it deploys to remain undetected). However, inconsistency is the least of the novel's concerns;[15] treading the ambiguous paths where its inventor leads it, it always manages to carry out both sections of its impossible task, even when it seems to be taking short cuts and settling the option in favor of some temperamental or stylistic requirement. Indeed, whether it be realistic or utopian, the ingenious Don Quixote who will one day epitomize both its significance and its fate, is already its true master-thinker: he never deals with anything but the windmills of his dream, but neither does he ever abandon reality; his dream has no other object than reality and the forces of reality he hopes to overcome.

Whatever the novel may be, whatever its ideologies or aesthetic preconceptions, it is always a primarily Quixotic undertaking which, possessing only the reality of its dreams, strives nonetheless to depict and encourage experience. Offshoot of an unwritten genre intimately related to the various stages of human development—birth, marriage, death, every transition seen as a social or historical event—its assumed "worldliness" is based on its indispensable props: time and space—circumscribed, relative, labored time and thickly populated, shifting space teeming with figures and prospects. The old definitions were perhaps not so misguided in stressing its innate relation to history, or in distinguishing it according to criteria of duration (though obviously in this case duration cannot be calculated in pages). Indeed historical time is intrinsic to its original motivation; time is what it mainly imitates, pursues, annihilates or anticipates; and it is history as such—personal or otherwise—which is forever being retold in its pseudo-chronologies. Thus it might always bear the title one of its most famous exponents found for it: *A la Recherche du temps perdu;* for it is an art that deals with the past yet is intent on a present it would overcome;[16] time is the element in which it bathes, its essence, or at least what it claims to borrow and to repay in order that its images may come alive.

Although what makes the novel a quest for lost time, a sentimental education, a formative period of apprenticeship, or in other words, an *exploitation* of time and space, is its more or less primitive desire to recast life under ideal circumstances (which does not imply that the lives it represents are necessarily better or happier than ours, only that the writer has to feel that he is correcting his own life as he writes) it is by no means constricted in its manipulation of empirical data, or more precisely, of the illusions on which its effects are based. Broadly speaking—and leaving aside its less permanent manifestations—fictional illusion can be achieved in two ways: either the author acts *as if* there were no such thing, and the book is then said to be realistic, naturalistic or simply true to life; or else he can stress the *as if,* which is always his main ulterior motive, in which case it is called a work of fantasy, imagination or subjectivity, or perhaps classified under the general heading of symbolism. Thus there are two kinds of novel: one purporting to draw material from life

so as to produce a "slice of life" or the famous "mirror carried around the country-side"; the other acknowledging quite openly that it is only a set of figures and forms, and thus disclaiming all responsibility for what does not proceed directly from its scheme. Of the two, the first is of course the more deceptive, since it is wholly intent on concealing its tricks; moreover it stresses the other's deceit; for if writing and living are not simply analogous, but represent various stages through which every author can hope to evolve, then the novel of pure imagination must, of necessity, be seen as insincere, or at any rate as trying to be no more than a pleasant diversion (which is what the Priest and the Barber in *Don Quixote* held against romances of chivalry). This viewpoint has not always been acknowledged; but the genre's ever-increasing popularity has tended to strengthen it, and it has now prevailed to the extent that it is not even questioned and, indeed, contributes the one solid basis for criticism. Thus, we repeat (since this is the source of most misunderstandings), it is taken for granted that *L'Histoire naturelle d'une famille sous le Second Empire* is truer than *Alice in Wonderland;* that Hoffmann's Berlin is more unreal than Musil's Vienna; that Moby Dick only exists in a symbolic world, while Madame Bovary "suffers and weeps in twenty French villages at this very minute";[17] that Don Quixote is an improbable figure and Raskolnikov taken, as it were, from life—which amounts to classifying novels according to their varying degrees of realism—if such degrees can ever be measured. Once again, it is precisely to this that more advanced modern theories take exception:[18] for these, fiction cannot be more or less true to life; Don Quixote is no less alive than Anna Karenina, notwithstanding the improbability of his adventures; Emma Bovary is no more privileged in this respect than Kafka's Land Surveyor, even though she possesses certain features which "place" a fictional character and make it come alive, while he does not; in short, though the more extremely realistic writers may have thought otherwise, nothing warrants the classification of fictional works according to their realism, apart from an unquestioned tendency to approximate. But then how is it that the criterion of truthfulness to life or credibility should be so generally accepted that it is applied automatically? How is it that Flaubert, otherwise so concerned with theoretical coherence, should reply in detail to Sainte Beuve's criticism of certain minor inaccuracies in *Salammbô* as if he considered they were justified? If the relation between the novel and reality only exists on paper, how is it that Goethe's *Werther* is supposed to have provoked an epidemic of suicides among contemporary adolescents, and that the first installment of *Crime and Punishment* prompted a Russian youth to actually commit Raskolnikov's fictional crimes? And how is it that the most enlightened among us see the novel as a mysterious emanation of life, to the extent of believing that it has a moral influence or, more oddly still, an impact on political and social events?[19] Strictly speaking this apparently unshakable belief is doubtless akin to superstition; but although it may be invalidated theoretically, psychology at least can find excellent motivations for it that account substantially for its permanence. Though the superstitions surrounding the novel may be false as such, they contain that portion of truth to which all forgotten psychic phenomena are entitled; for they bear witness to the unquestioning faith we all had once

in our own stories, and to the survival of the now unconscious Family Romance, forever seeking an outlet, and whose spell is everlasting. That is why we have little cause to marvel at the persistent obduracy of readers in general and of a large number of novelists, to the theoreticians' censures: notwithstanding cultural distinctions and generation gaps, reader and writer will always be united by something like a complicity of faith or the sharing of a secret vice.

Thus there is a logic to our irrational faith in fiction. The reader may be misguided in giving more credit to a novel by Balzac than to tales of improbable adventures willfully projected onto a utopian nowhere; but he has every reason to experience Balzac's "world" quite otherwise than Swift's Lilliput; for they represent two fictional methods it is essential to distinguish because, from the personal standpoint they are compelled to express, they have not attained the same level of maturity. Apart from aesthetic considerations[20] and the intentional significance each writer puts into his imaginary world, the author who imitates human conflicts with their psychological nuances and chronology, events with their consequences and inextricable confusion, people with their characteristics and inconsistencies, *has not the same psychological age* as the novelist whose imagination spontaneously produces wonders and who does nothing at all to make them seem natural. Not that he is more clear-sighted, more able to provide a perfect reproduction, or necessarily a greater genius; but he shows greater maturity, in that he realizes that the world is something outside himself, a complex of positive data that no end of invention will ever enable him to penetrate. Insofar as such a writer undertakes to maintain his inventions within the bounds of probability and verisimilitude—which does not imply that he constructs a new fraction of reality, but only that, notwithstanding his suppressed destructiveness, he pays homage to things as they are—he submits to the subtle motivations of realism that intervene at the more advanced stages of the Family Romance's development, emulating in fact the Oedipal Bastard; whereas the visionary, bewitched by his visions and transformations, creating in isolation and against reality a dream world unrelated to experience, is unquestionably at the developmental stage of the Foundling, imprisoned in the pre-Oedipal universe whose only law is still the omnipotence of thought. "When fighting the world, back the world," Kafka said, presumably thinking of the destructive radicalism of his own Quixotic behavior, which he was forever trying to assert and to overcome.[21] There, indeed, lies the frontier between the two major directions the novel can follow and which it has, in fact, followed throughout its history—for strictly speaking there are but two ways of writing a novel: the way of the realistic Bastard who backs the world while fighting it head on; and the way of the Foundling who, lacking both the experience and the means to fight, avoids confrontation by flight or rejection.

Such differences of outlook have absolutely nothing to do with literary merit. The Foundling has probably as many masterpieces to his credit as has the maturer Bastard; moreover, though the distinction may help to put some kind of order in the confusion of literary works, it does not provide us with the classifying principle we would so much like to discover. Indeed the Bastard has still a great many features in common with the Foundling from whom he

evolved; and while endeavoring to adapt his ideas to the demands of experience, nonetheless, he can never completely free himself from the old spell. The adult novel is also heir to this relic from an archaic age; but on the other hand, it can never be as totally ignorant of the facts of life, nor as completely cut off from reality as the first childhood myth unavoidably is; thus it is never entirely free of Oedipal elements, except perhaps when, by exceeding the genre's limits, it can no longer claim to be a novel. Thus the two attitudes possible to fiction cannot be clearly pigeonholed; it is more a matter of degree; while providing definite *points of view,* they may well alternate in the works of one author, complement each other, disagree, blend together in the same story or even merge completely to produce one of those hybrid works that seem to be made exclusively in order to refute every theory. Since the two stages of the Romance are not antagonistic but, on the contrary, strictly interdependent, Balzac may well be "realistic" in *la Comédie humaine,* and then cross over to "the other side"[22] when writing *Louis Lambert* or *Seraphitus Seraphita;* Swift who is typically pre-Oedipal in the fantastic excesses of his *Travels,* can exploit this same tendency to exaggerate for the purposes of political or social satire; Flaubert is capable of realizing his theories of art with the utmost precision in *Madame Bovary* and *l'Education sentimentale* while reverting at will to the narcissistic, solitary Saint Anthony whose temptations haunted him all his life; and Cervantes, who wrote the *Exemplary Novels* as a true man of his time, could evoke Don Quixote's madness in such ambiguous terms that even today we do not know what to make of his ideas. Sometimes a realist will instill into a "slice of life" a dose of the unreal, or some stylistic ingredient that betrays the true visionary (those minute details, endless enumerations and all that grammar of excess by which Zola occasionally runs the risk of turning naturalism into delirium); at times, on the contrary, the acknowledged visionary uses visions as a means of saying something essential about reality; but the inconsistency is never wholly resolved unless it serves as direct inspiration for art;[23] the Western novel thrives on it—which accounts both for some of its conflicting "messages" and for the similarity and diversity of its geniuses.

This said—and notwithstanding the fact that the two stages of the novel correspond neither to historical dates nor to categories established by the various schools of thought—generally speaking each novelist is compelled nonetheless to be either for reality (when the Oedipal Bastard predominates); or (when the Foundling has the upper hand) to deliberately create another world—which amounts to being against reality. In the first case he is Balzac, Victor Hugo, Sue, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Proust, Faulkner, Dickens and all those who call themselves psychological, true to life, naturalistic or "engaged" novelists and, claiming to be initiated into life's mysteries by some god or demiurge, enliven their own story by simulating the rhythms and intricacies of existence itself. In the second case he is Cervantes as well as the author of romances of chivalry; he writes *Tristan and Isolde* or Cyrano de Bergerac's *l'Autre monde;* he is Hoffmann, Jean-Paul, Novalis, Kafka or Melville, and he always flies in the face of reality, ignoring or jostling history and geography. At times he is compulsively meticulous, checking every detail he translates into images which correspond to what he believes to be the truth; he learns

the art of the craftsman, the tradesman, the banker, the soldier, the philosopher and the scientist. At others, on the contrary, he will acknowledge no exterior boundaries to his vision; his freedom, commensurate with the constriction of his intimate desires, produces the extravagant creatures he calls fairies, giants, dwarfs, Houyhnhnms or performing dogs; and the tendentious orientation of his fantasies alone makes sense of his metamorphoses. In the first instance he respects reality and temporality, so that even his most violent rebellion reveals his piety, and the frivolity of his Oedipal gossip is still tinged with earnestness. In the second, aware of his total or, at best considerable lack of understanding, and thus of his inadequacy for the task of revealing the ins and outs of existence, he simply cancels out all of creation and sets up in its place imaginary worlds where the only limit to adventure is that of his imagination, desert islands where he reigns as an ingenious despotic Robinson Crusoe, and endless spaces where all the clocks have been miraculously or maliciously tampered with. On the one hand he imitates god, taking himself so seriously that he even tries to make his imitation believable; on the other he is god; a god so confident in his powers that he can afford to include the more subtle weapons of satire and irony in his magic arsenal; though, in fact, there is nothing to stop him from changing sides or even doing away with the dividing line altogether—which is what he does in his more exalted moments. But narcissistic Oedipus or Oedipal Narcissus, he nevertheless will always belong to one or other of the two major lines of descent, depending on the attitude he has originally adopted and which, sooner or later, will reveal his true nature.

It remains now to discover how the material corresponding to each age-group becomes organized; how each disposes its shadows and its stresses; and by what conventional method or unknown process the infantile desires that set the whole work in motion gradually emerge, are divulged, distorted, isolated or brought under the aegis of some ideal. For although—wholly determined by the Family Romance of which it is the sequel—the novel is never free to select its stage of development nor, in consequence, the level of human relationships it is able to depict—it can choose, nevertheless, between a vast range of methods for mingling invention and reality; and it is precisely in this art of choosing—which is art itself—that the extent of its freedom resides.

Notes

1. "Der Familienroman der Neurotiker" ("Family Romance") was first published in Otto Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero,* Leipzig and Vienna, 1909 (in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, Collected Papers,* vol. V, London, 1953ff.). Freud had as it were "bequeathed" this short essay to his young disciple who was specializing in the analysis of mythology. However, the discovery of the Family Romance predated 1909. Freud had been aware of its existence since much earlier, having mentioned it in 1897 in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess; and in 1899 he had already given it the name by which it is still referred to in psychoanalytical literature. Actually, the theory of the Family Romance developed empirically and thus reflects the hazardousness of Freudian thought at the time of its arduous beginnings. Freud was impressed by the part this strange fabrication played in the thoughts of most seriously disturbed

patients; but, seeing it at first as a pathological symptom particular to paranoia, he called it *Entfremdungsroman* which expresses the notion of a psychotic refusal of reality. Later he was led by experience to alter his views and to realize that the Family Romance was in fact a general, totally non-specific phenomenon. Though the essay's original title is still influenced by his earlier view, in the text proper Freud clearly posits the phenomenon as a normal, general childhood phenomenon. It only becomes pathological in adults who continue to believe in it and to elaborate it. Thus the Family Romance can be defined as an expedient to which the imagination resorts in order to resolve the typical crisis in human development which the Oedipus Complex provokes.

2. "But it is not my father who talks like that!" says Oscar M., the hero of Kafka's unfinished story which is perhaps an early draft of "The Judgment." "My real father would have kissed me all the same, he would have called mother." André Breton, shocked by the religious undertones he detected in the words "my real father cannot fail to come" dismissed the fragment as apocryphal. But such an interpretation is far-fetched: Kafka was simply taking a significant fantasy of the Family Romance literally, as he did later in the simultaneously grandiose and grotesque epic exaggerations from which his "judges" and "gentlemen" originate. We should not overlook the fact that Oscar's invention of an imaginary father occurs during a row with his real father, whose attitude is unusually harsh and disappointing. Neither should we forget that the over-obvious reference to the Family Romance has been eliminated from the final version of "The Judgment"; understandably enough, since the fantasy would have become unconscious for this mature hero and thus could only be expressed by means of complex transpositions which would make it unrecognizable.

3. Since Freud did not publish the theory of Narcissism till 1914, "Family Romance" (1909) does not refer to it explicitly. However its presence is implicit, and the manner in which Freud analyzes infantile overevaluation of the parental image, as well as the general megalomaniac tendency which gives rise to most manifestations of such fantasies, shows how much importance he gave to a notion which was shortly to become central to his enquiry. Thus the typical situation common to all such pseudo-biographies may be considered from the narcissistic point of view, especially since in the Foundling myth it can have no other interpretation.

4. The legend of Oedipus strikingly combines the pre-sexual and, in this respect at least, innocent Foundling theme with that of the incestuous parricide where Freud found a confirmation of his theory of unconscious psychic activity. Oedipus, a King's son, was brought up by shepherds and his birth was Miraculous. In the *Myth of the Birth of the Hero,* where Freud's essay on the Family Romance first appeared, Otto Rank illustrates in a number of examples the extent to which accidents of birth determine the mythical or legendary hero's mission. It is not possible to imagine such a hero, legendary conqueror or religious prophet whose birth was not unusual in some way, whether mysterious, miraculous, fantastic or divine. Nor do such characters ever spend their childhood between their two parents, basking in the warmth of their common affection. They invariably come into the world on the wrong footing, as it were, and that is precisely what determines their vocation. Rank discovers many such unconscious rejection themes, some of which serve to compensate for the inferiority inherent in the premature birth and prolonged dependence characteristic of mankind; others are a call to arms in the age-old conflict between generations; but all provide an excuse for the two major crimes, parricide and incest. Here infantile megalomania plays an important part. Bella Grumberger (Cf. *le Narcissisme,* Paris, 1971)—who ascribes the psychology of heroism to narcissism, for which he contributes important new material—defines the hero as *one who does not want to owe his life to anybody.* His birth, unrelated to the laws of nature, is not a consequence of parental intercourse: he is his own begetter, the

son of God (the divine child constitutes a narcissistic triad with his parents), or at a more human level, a self-made man. Thus as a rule the hero is not re-united with his real parents (except in the Family Romance and, as we shall see, in its folklore extension, the fairy tale): he has to be parentless, that is he must reject his parents so that his mission may be confirmed by this self-generation and consequent independence. In this respect Oedipus is exceptional in that he encounters Laius and Jocasta and perpetrates on them the dual crime the Family Romance seeks to avoid. But then he is a tragic hero and not a fictional one.

5. The real novelist sometimes goes much further—Dostoevsky consciously desired his father's death at an age when such desires, if they survive the resolution of the Oedipus Complex, have long since become unconscious. When his father was murdered by his serfs—and castrated into the bargain—he was overcome with remorse from which he tried apparently to rid himself by writing books about overt parricide. It should be noted, however, that the complementary theme of incest does not play any obvious part in his novels. Indeed, most novels seem to respect the taboo of the maternal incest theme as such, only dealing with it indirectly through the substitution of fraternal incest, for instance (Thomas Mann, Musil).

6. Dostoevsky, who like all novelists but perhaps more consciously than most, draws his fiction from the inexhaustible sources of the Family Romance, depicts the Bastard with a penetration and depth of analysis which prematurely vindicates Freud's most audacious theories. Thus the character who plays the title role in his novel *The Adolescent,* a youth upon whom chance has bestowed a princely name, but who is the illegitimate son of a provincial lord and the legitimate son of a former serf, boasts about his illegitimacy so shamelessly that his interlocutor exclaims: "Such feelings obviously do you honor . . . *You might almost have been at the party*" (my italics). With these last words Dostoevsky plumbs the depths of the Bastard's boastfulness, which, more than humiliation and a natural reaction to offended pride, expresses a barely veiled desire to participate in his parents' most intimate relations, or as the psychoanalysts say, in the "primal scene." Moreover autobiography might well play a part in all this, if we consider Dostoevsky's own version of the circumstances surrounding his first epileptic fit: it took place outside the door of his parents' bedroom. Smerdiakov, another of Dostoevsky's Bastards, is notable for a similar boastfulness in his relation to others. This is what inspires such aversion in Ivan Karamazov, the legitimate would-be parricide who sees him as his double, the ignoble ape of his own diabolism. Here the Bastard commits the murder of which the two legitimate sons only dream, Ivan because of his inordinate narcissism, Dmitry because of his sexual jealousy (to which the author—again in perfect agreement with psychoanalytical theory—adds the motive of gain).

7. Dostoevsky again writes in his Diary "To be God," and "To be the first in everything." Cf. Dominique Arban, *Les Années d'apprentissage de Fiodor Dostoievski,* Paris, 1968.

8. The dual role the Family Romance implicitly assigns to women is clearly defined in the situation on which Kafka's *Castle* is based; a situation whose significance is generally overlooked by critics, perhaps because it is too explicit. K. the Land Surveyor is seduced by Frieda at the very moment when he learns that she is the mistress of Klamm—an obvious father-figure, observed with adult irony but with a child's characteristic exaggeration. He wants to marry her, but after a while begins to feel a kind of aversion for her and wonders if it was not perhaps Klamm's "reflected light" which had made her so "fantastically beautiful" in the first place and if any of Klamm's mistresses might not have appealed to him as much. Frieda herself accuses him of seeing her as a "pawn" in his attempts to succeed in reaching Klamm—in other words, simply to succeed—an accusation the Castle authorities do not hesitate to take up.

9. Kafka writes in his famous letter to his father: "Thus (through literature) I had succeeded in getting quite a distance away from you. . . . I was somehow out of reach. . . . Of course it was only an illusion, I was not yet free. My books were about you, I was always complaining in them about the things I could not complain about in your arms. . . . It was a leave taking, an intentionally prolonged leave taking."

10. It has often been said that every novel might be called *Crime and Punishment.* Indeed the Family Romance shows why and to what extent this is true. But considered from the point of view of the genre's two basic tendencies, every novel might equally be called *The Trial,* "The Judgment," *L'Education sentimentale, The Insulted and Injured, La Recherche de l'absolu* and, or perhaps especially *Vanity Fair.*

11. The fact that the novel is immoral independently from its content and the moralistic, messianic tendencies in which it naturally indulges—precisely because of its origins,—has been acknowledged by all novelists who draw their inspiration from the inner sources that make it worthwhile, and not from the superficial sphere wherein they find their self-justification. After attempting to turn the novel into a means of doing "good" Tolstoy came to see it as an agent of the Devil and finally condemned it. For identical reasons Gogol burnt *Dead Souls* and Kafka, who also burnt most of his manuscripts, refers to the joys of creativity as "the devil's wages."

12. According to Freudian theory there is no essential difference between the imagination's various languages, whether literary, musical, pictorial or even scientific and philosophical. Freud made the point when he published, as his first analysis of a work of art, not the analysis of a literary text, but of Leonardo's St. Anne, where he discovered a birth-fantasy representing a very primitive stage of the Family Romance (the invisible vulture traced within the visible figures of the painting being associated with the legendary phallic mother who engenders her own child).

13. This is Sartre's definition of the offence he imputes to Proust, in particular, whom he accuses of confusing the issue by wilfully sharing out biographical data between himself and his fictional characters. Now Proust (who waited till after his parents' death to write his great novel, because he presumably feared it might kill them and thus realize the secret desire of his Family Romance) wrote mainly to refurbish his biography, with the irrepressible tendency to fantasticate and the preoccupation with detail typical of the genre in its earlier stages. His bad faith stemmed from the same source as his social ambition, his snobbishness and his pronounced partiality for Oedipal gossip. So there is no point in taking him to task for it, unless we consider that his book is not sufficiently distanced from its infantile model, and thus fails to disguise its motives completely. Though in that case bad faith must be imputed, not to the author's dishonesty, but to an aesthetic failure.

14. The peculiar quality of the faith we all put in our Family Romance is the only adequate explanation for the fictional illusion that makes, not only the artless but even the best informed reader, believe that Raskolnikov, Rastignac or Julien Sorel live just round the corner. When Oscar Wilde said that the greatest disaster *of his life* was the death of Lucien Rubempré in *Splendeur et misère des courtisanes,* nobody was shocked at the absurdity of a remark at which everyone would have scoffed if it had referred to Phèdre or Oedipus instead of Lucien. This is because the classical hero is answerable to quite other laws; his reality is not one with his veracity; his time is not clock-time; he is not created to give the impression of having a complete, detailed existence but to stress the unbridgeable gap separating representation from life. Whereas we unanimously allow the novel hero to come and go between life and the printed page.

15. Except when it steps back, as it were, sufficiently to perceive its own delusions and decides to use them as subject matter. I have tried to show elsewhere (Marthe Robert, *The Old and the New: From Don Quixote to Kafka,* Berkeley, 1977) that such

active and fictionalized self-scrutiny—or Quixotism, since Cervantes provides the first and most impressive example—is the only means at its disposal to overcome the ambiguity of "invention" and "reality," which otherwise inevitably degenerates into bad faith or artlessness.

16. Incidentally, science fiction, despite the dating of its adventures, does not deal with the future. Like all true descendants of the Family Romance, its inventions are more or less explicit critiques, or even satires, of the present. Neither indeed is it really based on the present, but on an unconscious nostalgia for the past (whence the remarkable prehistorical symbolism of such works).

17. According to Flaubert himself in a letter, where the author attributes his success, not only to the fact that his heroine is lifelike but also to the fact that she resembles the majority of ordinary women.

18. They cannot possibly all be named here. A substantial list can be found in Wellek & Warren: *The Theory of Literature,* New York, 1963.

19. Here Kafka's case is once again a good example of such singular incoherence: formerly rejected by Marxist critics (Lukács) on account of their abstractness and social pessimism, his books are now expressly associated with the Prague Spring Uprising, either as sources of inspiration for the revolutionary youth, or as an instrument in the hands of the reactionaries.

20. It is self-evident that everything we have said so far takes no account of the novelist's talent nor of the vast aesthetic differences between works. Before we could find out if the Family Romance would assist us in elucidating that point as well, we had to try to discover the basic features common to all artistic productions at their inception, independently from their value.

21. Elsewhere he writes: "You don't have to go out of the house. Stay at your desk and listen. Don't even listen, just wait. Don't even wait, be absolutely still and alone. The world will come and offer itself to you so as to be unmasked, it can't do otherwise, it will writhe before you in ecstasy." The Foundling's utter faith in the magical power of self-absorption cannot be better expressed. But Kafka was never content with such an ideology. Throughout all his writings we see it conflicting with his aim for the maturity and action which typifies the Bastard's attitude. K. the Land Surveyor is the main exponent of such a conflict.

22. *Die andere Seite* (The other side) is the title of a novel of fantasy by Alfred Kubin, where the author proves himself to be a true spokesman for the Foundling.

23. A novel's greater or lesser success in achieving the balance between Foundling introversion and the Bastard's relative extrovertedness might serve as a criterion when assessing its value. Thus the most accomplished work would be that where *a purely literary combination of elements* achieves the near-impossible feat of making it simultaneously for and against reality, completely on "the other side" and entirely here (Cervantes, Flaubert, Kafka).

Part Four

Grand Theory I

A HALF-CENTURY AFTER its composition, Georg Lukács looked back on *The Theory of the Novel* as a youthful effusion whose excesses were deeply colored by the imminent outbreak of the Great War. It remains the most important and influential work in the field its title names. Like his contemporaries José Ortega y Gasset and Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Lukács understood his task in historical terms, requiring the discrimination of the novel, as a modern form, from the founding Western narrative genre, the epic. "The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality." Hegelian at its core, Lukács's eclectic terminology strives to capture the process of historical emergence through a series of resonant oppositions. The epic is the genre of direct givenness and semantic immanence, informing a "concrete totality" that is "rounded from within." In the novel, concrete totality becomes abstract "system," "organic" "structure" becomes "conceptual" and "architectural construction." Where epic expresses the direct immediacy of "first nature," the novel, "estranged" from these given structures, experiences them as "second nature," as "the world of convention."

Despite appearances, Lukács is not positing the epic world as one of absolute and essential nature. Itself the product of estrangement, first nature "is nothing other than the historico-philosophical objectivation of man's alienation from his own constructs." Second nature differs from first nature not in its essence but in the self-consciousness with which it is conceived, and which it therefore represents. An estrangement from an estrangement, second nature "is only a projection of man's experience of his self-made environment as a prison instead of as a parental home." More characteristically, the world of the novel is one not of imprisonment but of "transcendental homelessness."

Is the "parental home" from which the novel is estranged the "place" from which Frye conceives realism to be "displaced"? Is it the pre-Oedipal family before "the feeling of being slighted" occasions the family romance?[1] Certainly Lukács's language encourages a (gendered) analogy between individual and cultural "development" that's already discernible, in skeletal form, in Freud: "The novel is the art-form of virile maturity, in contrast to the normative childlikeness of the epic." As in Freud, however, the analogy is both evolutionary and

1. Compare the two stages of the family romance with Lukács's two-part chronological typology: the novel of "abstract idealism," in which the world predominates over soul, adventure over interiority; and the "romanticism of disillusionment," in which the pattern of dominance is reversed.

devolutionary, a complexity Lukács figures most crucially by complicating the structuralist relationship of literary form and content. Unlike the singer of epic, the novelist has a "double" experience of reflection: "His reflection consists of giving form to what happens to the idea in real life, of describing the actual nature of this process and of evaluating and considering its reality. This reflection, however, in turn becomes an object for reflection."

The doubleness of reflection, recalling in Lukács himself the doubleness of estrangement, reminds us also of the structuralist concern with novelistic detachment as a joint exercise in objectivity and reflexivity. All genres, says Guillén, invite us to match matter to form (ch. 3.). "Every form," says Lukács, "is the resolution of a fundamental dissonance of existence. . . . The creation of forms is the most profound confirmation of the existence of a dissonance. But in all other genres . . . this affirmation of a dissonance precedes the act of form-giving, whereas in the novel it is the form itself. . . . The dissonance special to the novel, the refusal of the immanence of being to enter into empirical life, produces a problem of form . . . which . . . looks like a problem of content." That is, "the fundamental form-determining intention of the novel is objectivized as the psychology of the novel's heroes: they are seekers. The simple fact of seeking implies that neither the goals nor the way leading to them can be directly given."

Novelistic form, we may paraphrase, created to resolve the problem of dissonance that occasions all formal creation, instead takes on the irresolvability of dissonance as its basic premise. As a result, the search for form is "objectivated"—internalized or thematized—on the level of content, which reflects, and reflects upon, its own formal problem. It's crucial to recognize how Lukács works against structuralism's devolutionary nostalgia even as he evokes it. The novel neither lacks form nor possesses it in a weakened or censored state. Rather, the novel has a problematic attitude toward its form, which it expresses by self-consciously replicating form as content. In its invitation to the matching of matter and form, the novel genre provides writer and reader with a model of form-as-content whose formal articulation of dissonance can be met through an indefinite range of material (linguistic) articulations. As Lukács acutely remarks, the novel "has been described as only half an art by many who equate *having a problematic* with *being problematic*." Certainly novelistic estrangement entails "the deepest melancholy," "a nostalgia of the soul" Lukács himself shares because it's the mark of modernity. But the positive freedom of relation, lost when the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, is tentatively balanced by the consequent, negative freedom of autonomous self-recognition: "In the novel the subject, as observer and creator, is compelled by irony to apply its recognition of the world to itself and to treat itself, like its own creatures, as a free object of free irony."

Lukács hereby provides the basis for a theory of novelistic characterization. In the world of the epic, ethic is invisibly woven into the communal nature of totality; "the omnipotence of ethics, which posits every soul as autonomous and incomparable, is still unknown in such a world." The novelistic hero, however, is just such an "ethical" subject, an "individual" "personality" possessed of an "interiority" whose problematic relationship to the world helps

explain the tendency of novelistic form toward the biographical: "The fluctuation between a conceptual system which can never completely capture life and a life complex which can never attain completeness . . . can be objectivized only in that organic quality which is the aim of biography." The "organic quality" of biography lies in the fact that by thematizing fluctuation, it imposes on the novelistic hero—or "constructs" for it—a sense of limits that alludes to the quality of direct givenness peculiar to the "structures" of epic totality.

True, the very need for biographical construction reveals "the great difference between the discrete, unlimited nature of the material of the novel and the continuum-like infinity of the material of the epic. This lack of limits in the novel has a 'bad' infinity about it. . . . The novel overcomes its 'bad' infinity by recourse to the biographical form." Lukács's distinction between a "good" and "bad" infinity strikingly recalls Lévi-Strauss's distinction between the mythic and the novelistic, the synchronic and the diachronic, the metaphorical and the metonymic relations between nature and culture. The former is "unlimited" in the way the tight cohesion of differential analogy undergoes continuous repetition, the latter in the elastic inclusiveness by which the seriality of episodic narrative may be endlessly extended. Lukács thus evokes the structuralist dichotomy of form and content, structure and history even as he goes beyond it to imply a dialectical interpenetration of categories.

Twenty-five years and the Russian Revolution later, *The Historical Novel* unfolds this implication in the trenchant terms of historical materialism. For Lukács as for Marx, "history" is not the diachronic antithesis of synchronic "structure," but a complex dialectic of diachronic and synchronic relations. Historical diachrony involves the dialectical relation of temporal stages within a scheme of periodicity, most fundamentally, the relation between tradition and modernity. The key to historical synchrony in Marxist terms is the dialectical relation between infrastructure and superstructure—or between forces of production, relations of production, and ideology—a single "moment" of the diachronic continuum which, provisionally "in its own right," can be abstracted for examination. The "historical novel" of the nineteenth century represents one such moment. In order to do full justice to its historical analysis, Lukács begins this synchronic study of literary superstructure at the most general level of literary form, the level of mode. Why did the flowering of historicism at this crucial moment "produce the historical novel and not the historical drama?"

"Mode" sets the outer limits of the historicity of literary forms by defining those basic possibilities of presentational form that are invariable over time. Lukács first separates drama and narrative[2] from lyric as those modes that represent the totality of the outer world. He proceeds (with Hegel) to distinguish drama from narrative as modes that respectively represent a "totality of movement" and a "totality of objects." Drama concentrates attention on a single, cataclysmic collision of essential personages, whereas narrative decenters historical movement by representing a broad diversity of personages and

2. Lukács uses the term "epic" both modally and generically, to refer both to narrative as such and to specifically epic narrative.

a vast range of social experience as they contribute to the gradual, incremental, and deeply contextual process of historical change. Both modes represent historical existence; but "the novel is more historical than drama. . . . The novel counters the general historicism of the essence of a collision with the concrete historicism of all the details."

What infrastructural conditions are likely to synchronize with these superstructural literary modes? Although he complicates it immediately, Lukács lays down the general principle that great tragedy flourishes in periods of the most rapid and revolutionary social transformation. The novel, by contrast, flowers at times when social change occurs in the intricate and minute specificity of interactive tendencies.[3] The difference can be exemplified with respect to the distinction between the concentrated singularity of dramatic characterization and the more elaborated multiplicity of novelistic characterization. Lukács makes clear that this difference is a function not only of superstructural (or formal) possibility, but also of infrastructural (or socioeconomic) conditions. The gradual emergence of the novel coincides with the gradual development of class consciousness in the early modern period. In pre-modern social formations, the material existence of individuals is experienced as so closely implicated within status categories that "individuality" as such, however available as a condition of existence, is nonetheless inaccessible to consciousness. As the experience of status hierarchy is challenged by the authority of material labor—coalescing as an abstract category of existence that subdivides individuals into different classes of labor—what is produced is not only a new categorial consciousness (not status but class) but also a new differential between categorial consciousness itself and the personal or "individual" experience that it subsumes but cannot efface.[4] "Reflecting" this social development, the novel learns to conceive human "character" as a complex amalgam of, or oscillation between, the individual and the categorial or "typical." "What, therefore, would be tautology in drama, is in the novel an indispensable form for crystallizing the really typical."[5]

The attentive reader will note that the deeper Lukács moves into the synchronic differentiation of modes, the more he's inclined to substitute generic

3. These basic correlations are supported by the fact that (for example) drama composed under the latter conditions is likely to be "novelized" in form. Bakhtin uses this term in a far more global fashion: see below, pt. 6.

4. Lukács quotes Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (composed 1846), ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 83–84. Class consciousness cannot seamlessly enclose individuality as status consciousness had been able to do because it entails a self-conscious repudiation of status hierarchy precisely for the injustice of its arbitrary and "accidental" subjection of (individual) worth to (categorial) birth.

5. Lukács's famous investment in a "reflection theory" of cultural production, well exemplified in these passages, is a typically dialectical argument that avoids the materialist determinism with which it has been associated while at the same time maintaining the ultimate determinacy of the material. Compare his qualification of the general principle that superstructure (e.g., great tragedy) follows from infrastructure (e.g., great social revolution): "Marx and Lenin pointed out repeatedly that there have been situations which, though objectively revolutionary, have not led to a revolutionary outbreak, because of the insufficient development of the subjective factor."

for modal terms; thus "tragedy" and "the novel" silently fill in for "drama" and "narrative" (or "epic"). The significance of this terminological modulation can be understood in a number of ways. We may say, for example, that the "historicization" of literary mode Lukács undertakes in this discussion relativizes the absoluteness of the distinction between transhistorical mode and historical genre with which we began.[6] Or again, we may be struck by similarities between Lukács's diachronic analysis of the difference between the traditionality of epic and the modernity of the novel and his synchronic analysis of the difference between dramatic and narrative modes. To go no further than the topic of characterization, we've just seen the modal difference between "concentrated singularity" and "elaborated multiplicity" reinforced by the diachronic difference between status and class consciousness. This difference recalls not only *The Theory of the Novel*'s diachronic account of the emergence of novelistic characterization as that of "biographical fluctuation," but also the broad argument of that earlier work that the diachronic movement from epic to novel may be generalized as one from the tight cohesion of concrete totality to the elastic inclusiveness of the search for home. So in this respect, Lukács's praise of narrative as providing the "concrete historicism of all the details" is also a justification of what Frye might call the novel's "plausible elaboration of detail" as, not the displacement, but the emplacement, of form.

The fruits of Lukács's dialectical method—the treatment of categories as both absolute wholes and relative parts of greater wholes—can be seen at every level of his analysis. In the later sections of this reading, the synchronic whole of the "historical novel," provisionally isolated now both from the general mode of drama and from the other generic forms that compose the mode of narrative, is subjected to closer diachronic study. Although a distinctive form, the historical novel is not a distinct genre or sub-genre because its infrastructural referent lacks sufficient distinction from that of the novel as such to warrant the degree of historical differentiation that a distinct generic designation would imply. In the increasingly fine discriminations Lukács makes between what are nonetheless real formal differences—between "novel" and "social novel," between "social novel" and "historical novel," between "classical historical novel" and "new historical novel"—we sense a micro-recapitulation, under always distinct material conditions, of the same basic differential that organizes the synchronic (drama/narrative) and the diachronic (epic/novel) foundations of Lukács's theory of genre. In this important respect, then, the pre-Marxist and the Marxist "parts" of Lukács's work merge into a single whole. In another respect they do not: for the early priority of form, as that which becomes thematized in the novel as content, is in the Marxist formulation replaced by the determinant priority of material content/context, to which form is appropriate(d) (some ages are "dramatic," some "novelistic").[7]

6. See above, pt. 1.

7. We will return to Lukács, in a yet further stage of his own development as a theorist of the novel, below, ch. 35.

11

Georg Lukács

From The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature

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As a result of such a change in the transcendental points of orientation, art forms become subject to a historico-philosophical dialectic; the course of this dialectic will depend, however, on the a priori origin or "home" of each genre. It may happen that the change affects only the object and the conditions under which it came to be given form, and does not question the ultimate relationship of the form to its transcendental right to existence; when this is so, only formal changes will occur, and although they may diverge in every technical detail, they will not overturn the original form-giving principle. Sometimes, however, the change occurs precisely in the all-determining *principium stilisationis* of the genre, and then other art-forms must necessarily, for historico-philosophical reasons, correspond to the same artistic intention. This is not a matter of a change in mentality giving rise to a new genre, such as occurred in Greek history when the hero and his destiny became problematic and so brought into being the non-tragic drama of Euripides. In that case there was a complete correspondence between the subject's[1] a priori needs, his metaphysical sufferings, which provided the impulse for creation, and the pre-stabilized, eternal locus of the form with which the completed work coincides. The genre-creating principle which is meant here does not imply any change in mentality; rather, it forces the same mentality to turn toward a new aim which is essentially different from the old one. It means that the old parallelism of the transcendental structure of the form-giving subject and the world of created forms has been destroyed, and the ultimate basis of artistic creation has become homeless.

German Romanticism, although it did not always completely clarify its concept of the novel, drew a close connection between it and the concept of the Romantic; and rightly so, for the novel form is, like no other, an expression of this transcendental homelessness. For the Greeks the fact that their history and the philosophy of history coincided meant that every art form was born

only when the sundial of the mind showed that its hour had come, and had to disappear when the fundamental images were no longer visible on the horizon. This philosophical periodicity was lost in later times. Artistic genres now cut across one another, with a complexity that cannot be disentangled, and become traces of authentic or false searching for an aim that is no longer clearly and unequivocally given; their sum total is only a historical totality of the empirical, wherein we may seek (and possibly find) the empirical (sociological) conditions for the ways in which each form came into being, but where the historico-philosophical meaning of periodicity is never again concentrated in the forms themselves (which have become symbolic) and where this meaning can be deciphered and decoded from the totalities of various periods, but not discovered in those totalities themselves. But whereas the smallest disturbance of the transcendental correlations must cause the immanence of meaning in life to vanish beyond recovery, an essence that is divorced from life and alien to life can crown itself with its own existence in such a way that this consecration, even after a more violent upheaval, may pale but will never disappear altogether. That is why tragedy, although changed, has nevertheless survived in our time with its essential nature intact, whereas the epic had to disappear and yield its place to an entirely new form: the novel.

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The Epic and the Novel

The epic and the novel, these two major forms of great epic literature, differ from one another not by their authors' fundamental intentions but by the given historico-philosophical realities with which the authors were confronted. The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality. It would be superficial—a matter of a mere artistic technicality—to look for the only and decisive genre-defining criterion in the question of whether a work is written in verse or prose.

Verse is not an ultimate constituent either of the epic or of tragedy, although it is indeed a profound symptom by which the true nature of these forms is most truly and genuinely revealed. Tragic verse is sharp and hard, it isolates, it creates distance. It clothes the heroes in the full depth of their solitude, which is born of the form itself; it does not allow of any relationships between them except those of struggle and annihilation; its lyricism can contain notes of despair or excitement about the road yet to be traveled and its ending, it can show glimpses of the abyss over which the essential is suspended, but a purely human understanding between the tragic characters' souls will never break through, as it sometimes does in prose; the despair will never turn into elegy, nor the excitement into a longing for lost heights; the soul can never seek to plumb its own depths with psychologistic vanity, nor admire itself in the mirror of its own profundity.

Dramatic verse, as Schiller wrote to Goethe, reveals whatever triviality there may be in the artistic invention: it has a specific sharpness, a gravity all

its own, in face of which nothing that is merely lifelike—which is to say nothing that is dramatically trivial—can survive: if the artist's creative mentality has anything trivial about it, the contrast between the weight of the language and that of the content will betray him.

Epic verse, too, creates distances, but in the sphere of the epic (which is the sphere of life) distance means happiness and lightness, a loosening of the bonds that tie men and objects to the ground, a lifting of the heaviness, the dullness, which are integral to life and which are dispersed only in scattered happy moments. The created distances of epic verse transform such moments into the true level of life. And so the effect of verse is here the opposite just because its immediate consequences—that of abolishing triviality and coming closer to the essence—is the same. Heaviness is trivial in the sphere of life—the epic—just as lightness is trivial in tragedy. An objective guarantee that the complete removal of everything lifelike does not mean an empty abstraction from life but the becoming essence, can only be given the consistency with which these unlifelike forms are created; only if they are incomparably more fulfilled, more rounded, more fraught with substance than we could ever dream of in real life, can it be said that tragic stylization has been successfully achieved. Everything light or pallid (which of course has nothing to do with the banal concept of unlifelikeness) reveals the absence of a normative tragic intention and so demonstrates the triviality of the work, whatever the psychological subtlety and/or lyrical delicacy of its parts.

In life, however, heaviness means the absence of present meaning, a hopeless entanglement in senseless casual connections, a withered sterile existence too close to the earth and too far from heaven, a plodding on, an inability to liberate oneself from the bonds of sheer brutal materiality, everything that, for the finest immanent forces of life, represents a challenge which must be constantly overcome—it is, in terms of formal value judgment, triviality. A pre-stabilized harmony decrees that epic verse should sing of the blessedly existent totality of life; the pre-poetic process of embracing all life in a mythology had liberated existence from all trivial heaviness; in Homer, the spring buds were only just opening, ready to blossom. Verse itself, however, can only tentatively encourage the bud to open; verse can only weave a garland of freedom round something that has already been liberated from all fetters. If the author's action consists in disclosing buried meaning, if his heroes must first break out of their prisons and, in desperate struggles or long, wearisome wanderings, attain the home of their dreams—their freedom from terrestrial gravity—then the power of verse, which can spread a carpet of flowers over the chasm, is not sufficient to build a practicable road across it. The lightness of great epic literature is only the concretely immanent utopia of the historical hour, and the form-giving detachment which verse as a vehicle confers upon whatever it carries must, therefore, rob the epic of its great totality, its subjectlessness, and transform it into an idyll or a piece of playful lyricism. The lightness of great epic literature is a positive value and a reality-creating force only if the restraining bonds have really been thrown off. Great epic literature is never the result of men forgetting their enslavement in the lovely play of a liberated imagination or in tranquil retirement to happy isles not to be found

on the map of this world of trivial attachment. In times to which such lightness is no longer given, verse is banished from the great epic, or else it transforms itself, unexpectedly and unintentionally, into lyric verse. Only prose can then encompass the suffering and the laurels, the struggle and the crown, with equal power; only its unfettered plasticity and its non-rhythmic rigor can, with equal power, embrace the fetters and the freedom, the given heaviness and the conquered lightness of a world henceforth immanently radiant with found meaning. It is no accident that the disintegration of a reality-become-song led, in Cervantes' prose, to the sorrowful lightness of a great epic, whereas the serene dance of Ariosto's verse remained mere lyrical play; it is no accident that Goethe, the epic poet, poured his idylls into the mold of verse but chose prose for the totality of his *Meister* (master) novel. In the world of distances, all epic verse turns into lyric poetry (*Don Juan* and *Onegin,* although written in verse, belong to the company of the great humorous novels), for, in verse, everything hidden becomes manifest, and the swift flight of verse makes the distance over which prose travels with its deliberate pace as it gradually approaches meaning appear naked, mocked, trampled, or merely a forgotten dream.

Dante's verse, too, is not lyrical although it is more lyrical than Homer's; it intensifies and concentrates the ballad tone into an epic one. The immanence of the meaning of life is present and existent in Dante's world, but only in the beyond: it is the perfect immanence of the transcendent.

Distance in the ordinary world of life is extended to the point where it cannot be overcome, but beyond that world every lost wanderer finds the home that has awaited him since all eternity; every solitary voice that falls silent on earth is there awaited by a chorus that takes it up, carries it towards harmony and, through it, becomes harmony itself.

The world of distances lies sprawling and chaotic beneath the radiant celestial rose of sense made sensuous; it is visible and undisguised at every moment. Every inhabitant of that home in the beyond has come from this world, each is bound to it by the indissoluble force of destiny, but each recognizes it, sees it in its fragility and heaviness, only when he has traveled to the end of his path thereby made meaningful; every figure sings of its isolated destiny, the isolated event in which its apportioned lot was made manifest: a ballad. And just as the totality of the transcendent world-structure is the predetermined sense-giving, all-embracing a priori of each individual destiny, so the increasing comprehension of this edifice, its structure and its beauty—the great experience of Dante the traveler—envelops everything in the unity of its meaning, now revealed. Dante's insight transforms the individual into a component of the whole, and so the ballads become epic songs. The meaning of this world becomes distanceless, visible and immanent only in the beyond. Totality, in this world, is bound to be a fragile or merely a longed-for one: the verse passages in Wolfram von Eschenbach or Gottfried von Strassburg are only lyrical ornaments to their novels, and the ballad quality of the *Song of the Nibelungs* can be disguised by compositional means, but cannot be rounded so that it achieves world-embracing totality.

The epic gives form to a totality of life that is rounded from within; the novel seeks, by giving form, to uncover and construct the concealed totality of life. The given structure of the object (i.e., the search, which is only a way of expressing the subject's recognition that neither objective life nor its relationship to the subject is spontaneously harmonious in itself) supplies an indication of the form-giving intention. All the fissures and rents which are inherent in the historical situation must be drawn into the form-giving process and cannot nor should be disguised by compositional means. Thus the fundamental form-determining intention of the novel is objectivized as the psychology of the novel's heroes: they are seekers. The simple fact of seeking implies that neither the goals nor the way leading to them can be directly given, or else that, if they are given in a psychologically direct and solid manner, this is not evidence of really existent relations or ethical necessities but only of a psychological fact to which nothing in the world of objects or norms need necessarily correspond. To put it another way, this "givenness" may be crime or madness; the boundaries which separate crime from acclaimed heroism and madness from life-mastering wisdom are tentative, purely psychological ones, although at the end, when the aberration makes itself terribly manifest and clear, there is no longer any confusion.

In this sense, the epic and the tragedy know neither crime nor madness. What the customary concepts of everyday life call crime is, for them, either not there at all, or it is nothing other than the point, symbolically fixed and sensually perceptible from afar, at which the soul's relationship to its destiny, the vehicle of its metaphysical homesickness, becomes visible. The epic world is either a purely childlike one in which the transgression of stable, traditional norms has to entail vengeance which again must be avenged ad infinitum, or else it is the perfect theodicy in which crime and punishment lie in the scales of world justice as equal, mutually homogeneous weights.

In tragedy crime is either nothing at all or a symbol—it is either a mere element of the action, demanded and determined by technical laws, or it is the breaking down of forms on this side of the essence, it is the entrance through which the soul comes into its own. Of madness the epic knows nothing, unless it be the generally incomprehensible language of a superworld that possesses no other means of expression. In non-problematic tragedy, madness can be the symbolic expression of an end, equivalent to physical death or to the living death of a soul consumed by the essential fire of selfhood. For crime and madness are objectivations of transcendental homelessness—the homelessness of an action in the human order of social relations, the homelessness of a soul in the ideal order of a supra-personal system of values. Every form is the resolution of a fundamental dissonance of existence; every form restores the absurd to its proper place as the vehicle, the necessary condition of meaning. When the peak of absurdity, the futility of genuine and profound human aspirations, or the possibility of the ultimate nothingness of man has to be absorbed into literary form as a basic vehicular fact, and when what is in itself absurd has to be explained and analyzed and, consequently, recognized as being irreducibly *there,* then, although some streams within such a form may flow into a sea of

fulfillment, the absence of any manifest aim, the determining lack of direction of life as a whole, must be the basic a priori constituent, the fundamental structural element of the characters and events within it.

Where no aims are directly given, the structures which the soul, in the process of *becoming-man,* encounters as the arena and sub-stratum of its activity among men lose their obvious roots in supra-personal ideal necessities; they are simply existent, perhaps powerful, perhaps frail, but they neither carry the consecration of the absolute within them nor are they the natural containers for the overflowing interiority of the soul. They form the world of convention, a world from whose all-embracing power only the innermost recesses of the soul are exempt, a world which is present everywhere in a multiplicity of forms too complex for understanding. Its strict laws, both in becoming and in being, are necessarily evident to the cognizant subject, but despite its regularity, it is a world that does not offer itself either as meaning to the aim-seeking subject or as matter, in sensuous immediacy, to the active subject. It is a second nature, and, like nature (first nature), it is determinable only as the embodiment of recognized but senseless necessities and therefore it is incomprehensible, unknowable in its real substance. Yet for creative literature substance alone has existence and only substances which are profoundly homogeneous with one another can enter into the fighting union of reciprocal compositional relationships.

Lyric poetry can ignore the phenomenalization of the first nature and can create a protean mythology of substantial subjectivity out of the constitutive strength of its ignorance. In lyric poetry, only the great moment exists, the moment at which the meaningful unity of nature and soul or their meaningful divorce, the necessary and affirmed loneliness of the soul becomes eternal. At the lyrical moment the purest interiority of the soul, set apart from duration without choice, lifted above the obscurely determined multiplicity of things, solidifies into substance; whilst alien, unknowable nature is driven from within, to agglomerate into a symbol that is illuminated throughout. Yet this relationship between soul and nature can be produced only at lyrical moments. Otherwise, nature is transformed—because of its lack of meaning—into a kind of picturesque lumber-room of sensuous symbols for literature; it seems to be fixed in its bewitched mobility and can only be reduced to a meaningfully animated calm by the magic word of lyricism. Such moments are constitutive and form-determining only for lyric poetry; only in lyric poetry do these direct, sudden flashes of the substance become like lost original manuscripts suddenly made legible; only in lyric poetry is the subject, the vehicle of such experiences, transformed into the sole carrier of meaning, the only true reality. Drama is played out in a sphere that lies beyond such reality, and in the epic forms the subjective experience remains inside the subject: it becomes mood. And nature, bereft of its "senseless" autonomous life as well of its meaningful symbolism, becomes a background, a piece of scenery, an accompanying voice; it has lost its independence and is only a sensually perceptible projection of the essential—of interiority.

The second nature, the nature of man-made structures, has no lyrical substantiality; its forms are too rigid to adapt themselves to the symbol-creating moment; the content of the second nature, precipitated by its own laws, is too

definite to be able to rid itself of those elements which, in lyric poetry, are bound to become essayistic; furthermore, these elements are so much at the mercy of laws, are so absolutely devoid of any sensuous valency of existence independent from laws, that without them they can only disintegrate into nothingness. This second nature is not dumb, sensuous and yet senseless like the first: it is a complex of senses—meanings—which has become rigid and strange, and which no longer awakens interiority; it is a charnel-house of long-dead interiorities; this second nature could only be brought to life—if this were possible—by the metaphysical act of reawakening the souls which, in an early or ideal existence, created or preserved it; it can never be animated by another interiority. It is too akin to the soul's aspirations to be treated by the soul as mere raw material for moods, yet too alien to those aspirations ever to become their appropriate and adequate expression. Estrangement from nature (the first nature), the modern sentimental attitude to nature, is only a projection of man's experience of his self-made environment as a prison instead of as a parental home.

When the structures made by man for man are really adequate to man, they are his necessary and native home; and he does not know the nostalgia that posits and experiences nature as the object of its own seeking and finding. The first nature, nature as a set of laws for pure cognition, nature as the bringer of comfort to pure feeling, is nothing other than the historico-philosophical objectivation of man's alienation from his own constructs.

When the soul-content of these constructs can no longer directly become soul, when the constructs no longer appear as the agglomerate and concentrate of interiorities which can at any moment be transformed back into a soul, then they must, in order to subsist, achieve a power which dominates men blindly, without exception or choice. And so men call "law" the recognition of the power that holds them in thrall, and they conceptualize as "law" their despair at its omnipotence and universality: conceptualize it into a sublime and exalting logic, a necessity that is eternal, immutable and beyond the reach of man.

The nature of laws and the nature of moods stem from the same locus in the soul: they presuppose the impossibility of an attained and meaningful substance, the impossibility of finding a constitutive object adequate to the constitutive subject. In its experience of nature, the subject, which alone is real, dissolves the whole outside world in mood, and itself becomes mood by virtue of the inexorable identity of essence between the contemplative subject and its object. The desire to know a world cleansed of all wanting and all willing transforms the subject into an a-subjective, constructive and constructing embodiment of cognitive functions. This is bound to be so, for the subject is constitutive only when it acts from within—i.e., only the ethical subject is constitutive. It can only avoid falling prey to laws and moods if the arena of its actions, the normative object of its actions, is made of the stuff of pure ethics: if right and custom are identical with morality: if no more of the soul has to be put into the man-made structures to make them serve as man's proper sphere of action than can be released, by action, from those structures. Under such conditions the soul has no need to recognize any laws, for the soul itself is the law of man and man will behold the same face of the same soul

upon every substance against which he may have to prove himself. Under such conditions, it would seem petty and futile to try to overcome the strangeness of the non-human world by the mood-arousing power of the subject: the world of man that matters is the one where the soul, as man, god or demon, is at home: then the soul finds everything it needs, it does not have to create or animate anything out of its own self, for its existence is filled to overbrimming with the finding, gathering and molding of all that is given as cognate to the soul.

The epic individual, the hero of the novel, is the product of estrangement from the outside world. When the world is internally homogeneous, men do not differ qualitatively from one another; there are of course heroes and villains, pious men and criminals, but even the greatest hero is only a head taller than the mass of his fellows, and the wise man's dignified words are heard even by the most foolish. The autonomous life of interiority is possible and necessary only when the distinctions between men have made an unbridgeable chasm; when the gods are silent and neither sacrifices nor the ecstatic gift of tongues can solve their riddle; when the world of deeds separates itself from men and, because of this independence, becomes hollow and incapable of absorbing the true meaning of deeds in itself, incapable of becoming a symbol through deeds and dissolving them in turn into symbols; when interiority and adventure are forever divorced from one another.

The epic hero is, strictly speaking, never an individual. It is traditionally thought that one of the essential characteristics of the epic is the fact that its theme is not a personal destiny but the destiny of a community. And rightly so, for the completeness, the roundness of the value system which determines the epic cosmos creates a whole which is too organic for any part of it to become so enclosed within itself, so dependent upon itself, as to find itself as an interiority—i.e., to become a personality. The omnipotence of ethics, which posits every soul as autonomous and incomparable, is still unknown in such a world. When life qua life finds an immanent meaning in itself, the categories of the organic determine everything: an individual structure and physiognomy is simply the product of a balance between the part and the whole, mutually determining one another; it is never the product of polemical self-contemplation by the lost and lonely personality. The significance which an event can have in a world that is rounded in this way is therefore always a quantitative one; the series of adventures in which the event expresses itself has weight in so far as it is significant to a great organic life complex—a nation or a family.

Epic heroes have to be kings for different reasons from the heroes of tragedy (although these reasons are also formal). In tragedy the hero must be a king simply because of the need to sweep all the petty causalities of life from the ontological path of destiny—because the socially dominant figure is the only one whose conflicts, while retaining the sensuous illusion of a symbolic existence, grow solely out of the tragic problem; because only such a figure can be surrounded, even as to the forms of its external appearance, with the required atmosphere of significant isolation.

What is a symbol in tragedy becomes a reality in the epic: the weight of

the bonds linking an individual destiny to a totality. World destiny, which in tragedy is merely the number of noughts that have to be added to 1 to transform it into a million, is what actually gives the events of the epic their content; the epic hero, as bearer of his destiny, is not lonely, for this destiny connects him by indissoluble threads to the community whose fate is crystallized in his own.

As for the community, it is an organic—and therefore intrinsically meaningful—concrete totality; that is why the substance of adventure in an epic is always articulated, never strictly closed; this substance is an organism of infinite interior richness, and in this is identical or similar to the substance of other adventure.

The way Homer's epics begin in the middle and do not finish at the end is a reflection of the truly epic mentality's total indifference to any form of architectural construction, and the introduction of extraneous themes—such as that of Dietrich von Born in the Song of the Nibelungs—can never disturb this balance, for everything in the epic has a life of its own and derives its completeness from its own inner significance. The extraneous can calmly hold out its hand to the central; mere contact between concrete things creates concrete relationships, and the extraneous, because of its perspectival distance and its not yet realized richness, does not endanger the unity of the whole and yet has obvious organic existence.

Dante is the only great example in which we see the architectural clearly conquering the organic, and therefore he represents a historico-philosophical transition from the pure epic to the novel. In Dante there is still the perfect immanent distancelessness and completeness of the true epic, but his figures are already individuals, consciously and energetically placing themselves in opposition to a reality that is becoming closed to them, individuals who, through this opposition, become real personalities. The constituent principle of Dante's totality is a highly systematic one, abolishing the epic independence of the organic part-unities and transforming them into hierarchically ordered, autonomous parts. Such individuality, it is true, is found more in the secondary figures than in the hero. The tendency of each part-unity to retain its autonomous lyrical life (a category unknown and unknowable in the old epic) increases toward the periphery as the distance from the center becomes greater.

The combination of the presuppositions of the epic and the novel and their synthesis to an epopoeia is based on the dual structure of Dante's world: the break between life and meaning is surpassed and canceled by the coincidence of life and meaning in a present, actually experienced transcendence. To the postulate-free organic nature of the older epics, Dante opposes a hierarchy of fulfilled postulates. Dante—and only Dante—did not have to endow his hero with visible social superiority or with a heroic destiny that co-determined the destiny of the community—because his hero's lived experience was the symbolic unity of human destiny in general.

The Inner Form of the Novel

The totality of Dante's world is the totality of a visual system of concepts. It is because of this sensual "thingness," this substantiality both of the concepts

themselves and of their hierarchical order within the system, that completeness and totality can become constitutive structural categories rather than regulative ones: because of it, the progression through the totality is a voyage which, although full of suspense, is a well-conducted and safe one; and, because of it, it was possible for an epic to be created at a time when the historico-philosophical situation was already beginning to demand the novel. In a novel, totality can be systematized only in abstract terms, which is why any system that could be established in the novel—a system being, after the final disappearance of the organic, the only possible form of a rounded totality—had to be one of abstract concepts and therefore not directly suitable for aesthetic form-giving. Such abstract systematization is, it is true, the ultimate basis of the entire structure, but in the created reality of the novel all that becomes visible is the distance separating the systematization from concrete life: a systematization which emphasizes the conventionality of the objective world and the interiority of the subjective one. Thus the elements of the novel are, in the Hegelian sense, entirely abstract; abstract, the nostalgia of the characters for utopian perfection, a nostalgia that feels itself and its desires to be the only true reality; abstract, the existence of social structures based only upon their factual presence and their sheer ability to continue; abstract, finally, the form-giving intention which, instead of surmounting the distance between these two abstract groups of elements, allows it to subsist, which does not even attempt to surmount it but renders it sensuous as the lived experience of the novel's characters, uses it as a means of connecting the two groups and so turns it into an instrument of composition.

We have already recognized the dangers that arise from the fundamentally abstract nature of the novel: the risk of overlapping into lyricism or drama, the risk of narrowing reality so that the work becomes an idyll, the risk of sinking to the level of mere entertainment literature. These dangers can be resisted only by positing the fragile and incomplete nature of the world as ultimate reality by recognizing, consciously and consistently, everything that points outside and beyond the confines of the world.

Every art form is defined by the metaphysical dissonance of life which it accepts and organizes as the basis of a totality complete in itself; the mood of the resulting world, and the atmosphere in which the persons and events thus created have their being, are determined by the danger which arises from this incompletely resolved dissonance and which therefore threatens the form. The dissonance special to the novel, the refusal of the immanence of being to enter into empirical life, produces a problem of form whose formal nature is much less obvious than in other kinds of art, and which, because it looks like a problem of content, needs to be approached by both ethical and aesthetic arguments, even more than do problems which are obviously purely formal.

The novel is the art-form of virile maturity, in contrast to the normative childlikeness of the epic (the drama form, being in the margin of life, is outside the ages of man even if these are conceived as a priori categories or normative stages). The novel is the art-form of virile maturity: this means that the completeness of the novel's world, if seen objectively, is an imperfection, and if subjectively experienced, it amounts to resignation. The danger by which the

novel is determined is twofold: either the fragility of the world may manifest itself so crudely that it will cancel out the immanence of meaning which the form demands, or else the longing for the dissonance to be resolved, affirmed and absorbed into the work may be so great that it will lead to a premature closing of the circle of the novel's world, causing the form to disintegrate into disparate, heterogeneous parts. The fragility of the world may be superficially disguised but it cannot be abolished; consequently this fragility will appear in the novel as unprocessed raw material, whose weak cohesion will have been destroyed. In either case the structure remains abstract: the abstract basis of the novel assumes form as a result of the abstraction seeing through itself; the immanence of meaning required by the form is attained precisely when the author goes all the way, ruthlessly, toward exposing its absence.

Art always says "And yet!" to life. The creation of forms is the most profound confirmation of the existence of a dissonance. But in all other genres—even, for reasons we can now understand, in the epic—this affirmation of a dissonance precedes the act of form-giving, whereas in the novel it is the form itself. That is why the relationship between ethics and aesthetics in the creative process of the novel is different from what it is in other kinds of literature. There, ethic is a purely formal pre-condition which, by its depth, allows the form-determined essence to be attained and, by its breadth, renders possible a totality which is likewise determined by the form and which, by its all-embracing nature, establishes a balance between the constituent elements—a balance for which "justice" is only a term in the language of pure ethics. In the novel, on the other hand, ethic—the ethical intention—is visible in the creation of every detail and hence is, in its most concrete content, an effective structural element of the work itself.

Thus, the novel, in contrast to other genres whose existence resides within the finished form, appears as something in process of becoming. That is why, from the artistic viewpoint, the novel is the most hazardous genre, and why it has been described as only half an art by many who equate *having a problematic* with *being problematic.* The description may seem convincing because the novel—unlike other genres—has a caricatural twin almost indistinguishable from itself in all inessential formal characteristics: the entertainment novel, which has all the outward features of the novel but which, in essence, is bound to nothing and based on nothing, i.e., is entirely meaningless. Other genres, where being is treated as already attained, cannot have such a caricatural twin because the extra-artistic element of its creation can never be disguised even for a moment; whereas with the novel, because of the regulative, hidden nature of the effective binding and forming ideas, because of the apparent resemblance of empty animation to a process whose ultimate content cannot be rationalized, superficial likeness can almost lead to the caricature being mistaken for the real thing. But a closer look will always, in any concrete case, reveal the caricature for what it is.

Other arguments used to deny the genuinely artistic nature of the novel likewise enjoy only a semblance of truth—not only because the normative incompleteness, the problematic nature of the novel is a true-born form in the historico-philosophical sense and proves its legitimacy by attaining its substra-

tum, the true condition of the contemporary spirit, but also because its nature as a process excludes completeness only so far as content is concerned. As form, the novel establishes a fluctuating yet firm balance between becoming and being; as the idea of becoming, it becomes a state. Thus the novel, by transforming itself into a normative being of becoming, surmounts itself. "The voyage is completed: the way begins."

The "half-art" of the novel, therefore, prescribes still stricter, still more inviolable artistic laws for itself than do the power in the world if men did not sometimes fall prey to the more indefinable and unformulable they are in their very essence: they are laws of tact. Tact and taste, in themselves subordinate categories which belong wholly to the sphere of mere life and are irrelevant to an essential ethical world, here acquire great constitutive significance: only through them is subjectivity, at the beginning of the novel's totality and at its end, capable of maintaining itself in equilibrium, of positing itself as epically normative objectivity and thus of surmounting abstraction, the inherent danger of the novel form.

This danger can also be formulated in another way: where ethic has to carry the structure of a form as a matter of content and not merely as a formal a priori, and where a coincidence, or at least a marked convergence between ethic as an interior factor of life and its substratum of action in the social structures, is not given as it was in the epic ages, there is a danger that, instead of an existent totality, only a subjective aspect of that totality will be given form, obscuring or even destroying the creative intention of acceptance and objectivity which the great epic demands. This danger cannot be circumvented but can only be overcome from within. For such subjectivity is not eliminated if it remains unexpressed or is transformed into a will for objectivity: such a silence, such a will, is even more subjective than the overt manifestation of a clearly conscious subjectivity, and therefore, in the Hegelian sense, even more abstract.

The self-recognition and, with it, self-abolition of subjectivity was called irony by the first theoreticians of the novel, the aesthetic philosophers of early Romanticism. As a formal constituent of the novel form this signifies an interior diversion of the normatively creative subject into a subjectivity as interiority, which opposes power complexes that are alien to it and which strives to imprint the contents of its longing upon the alien world, and a subjectivity which sees through the abstract and, therefore, limited nature of the mutually alien worlds of subject and object, understands these worlds by seeing their limitations as necessary conditions of their existence and, by thus seeing through them, allows the duality of the world to subsist. At the same time the creative subjectivity glimpses a unified world in the mutual relativity of elements essentially alien to one another, and gives form to this world. Yet this glimpsed unified world is nevertheless purely formal; the antagonistic nature of the inner and outer worlds is not abolished but only recognized as necessary; the subject which recognizes it as such is just as empirical—just as much part of the outside world, confined in its own interiority—as the characters which have become its objects. Such irony is free from that cold and abstract superiority which narrows down the objective form to a subjective one and

reduces the totality to a mere aspect of itself; this is the case in satire. In the novel the subject, as observer and creator, is compelled by irony to apply its recognition of the world to itself and to treat itself, like its own creatures, as a free object of free irony: it must transform itself into a purely receptive subject, as is normatively required for great epic literature.

The irony of the novel is the self-correction of the world's fragility: inadequate relations can transform themselves into a fanciful yet well-ordered round of misunderstandings and cross-purposes, within which everything is seen as many-sided, within which things appear as isolated and yet connected, as full of value and yet totally devoid of it, as abstract fragments and as concrete autonomous life, as flowering and as decaying, as the infliction of suffering and as suffering itself.

Thus a new perspective of life is reached on an entirely new basis—that of the indissoluble connection between the relative independence of the parts and their attachment to the whole. But the parts, despite this attachment, can never lose their inexorable, abstract self-dependence: and their relationship to the totality, although it approximates as closely as possible to an organic one, is nevertheless not a true-born organic relationship but a conceptual one which is abolished again and again.

The consequence of this, from the compositional point of view, is that, although the characters and their actions possess the infinity of authentic epic literature, their structure is essentially different from that of the epic. The structural difference in which this fundamentally conceptual pseudo-organic nature of the material of the novel finds expression is the difference between something that is homogeneously organic and stable and something that is heterogeneously contingent and discrete. Because of this contingent nature, the relatively independent parts are more independent, more self-contained than those of the epic and must therefore, if they are not to destroy the whole, be inserted into it by means which transcend their mere presence. In contrast to the epic, they must have a strict compositional and architectural significance, whether this takes the form of contrasting lights thrown upon the central problem (as with the *novellas* included in *Don Quixote*) or of the introduction, by way of a prelude, of hidden motifs which are to be decisive at the end (as with the *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul*). The existence of the relatively independent parts can never be justified by their mere presence.

The ability of parts which are only compositionally united to have discrete autonomous life is, of course, significant only as a symptom, in that it renders the structure of the novel's totality clearly visible. It is by no means necessary in itself for every exemplary novel to exhibit this extreme consequence of the novel's structure. Any attempt to surmount the problematic of the novel by insisting exclusively on this specific aspect must, in fact, lead to artificiality and to excessive obviousness of composition, as with the Romantics or with the first novel of Paul Ernst.

This aspect is only a symptom of contingency; it merely sheds light upon a state of affairs which is necessarily present at all times and everywhere, but which is covered over, by skillfully ironic compositional tact, by a semblance of organic quality which is revealed again and again as illusory.

The outward form of the novel is essentially biographical. The fluctuation between a conceptual system which can never completely capture life and a life complex which can never attain completeness because completeness is immanently utopian, can be objectivized only in that organic quality which is the aim of biography. In a world situation where the organic was the all-dominating category of existence, to make the individuality of a living being, with all its limitations, the starting point of stylization and the center of form-giving would have seemed foolish—a gratuitous violence inflicted upon the organic. In an age of constitutive systems, the exemplary significance of an individual life could never be anything more than an example: to represent it as the vehicle of values rather than as their substratum, assuming even that such a project might have been conceived, would have been an act of the most ridiculous arrogance. In the biographical form, the separate being—the individual—has a specific weight which would have been too high for the predominance of life, too low for the absolute predominance of the system; his degree of isolation would have been too great for the former, meaningless for the latter; his relationship to the ideal of which he is the carrier and the agent would have been over-emphatic for the former, insufficiently subordinated for the latter.

In the biographical form, the unfulfillable, sentimental striving both for the immediate unity of life and for a completely rounded architecture of the system is balanced and brought to rest: it is transformed into being. The central character of a biography is significant only by his relationship to a world of ideals that stands above him: but this world, in turn, is realized only through its existence within that individual and his lived experience. Thus in the biographical form the balance of both spheres which are unrealized and unrealizable in isolation produces a new and autonomous life that is, however paradoxically, complete in itself and immanently meaningful: the life of the problematic individual.

The contingent world and the problematic individual are realities which mutually determine one another. If the individual is unproblematic, then his aims are given to him with immediate obviousness, and the realization of the world constructed by these given aims may involve hindrances and difficulties but never any serious threat to his interior life. Such a threat arises only when the outside world is no longer adapted to the individual's ideas and the ideas become subjective facts—*ideals*—in his soul. The positing of ideas as unrealizable and, in the empirical sense, as unreal, i.e., their transformation into ideals, destroys the immediate problem-free organic nature of the individual. Individuality then becomes an aim unto itself because it finds within itself everything that is essential to it and that make its life autonomous—even if what it finds can never be a firm possession or the basis of its life, but is an object of search. The surrounding world of the individual, however, is the substratum and material of the same categorical forms upon which his interior world is based, and differs from them only in its content; therefore the unbridgeable chasm between the reality that is and the ideal that should be must represent the essence of the outside world, the difference of their materials being only a structural one. This difference manifests itself most clearly in the

pure negativity of the ideal. In the subjective world of the soul the ideal is as much at home as the soul's other realities. But, at the level of the soul, the ideal by entering lived experience can play, even in its content, a directly positive role; whereas in the outside world the gap between reality and the ideal becomes apparent only by the absence of the ideal, in the immanent self-criticism of mere reality caused by that absence; in the self-revelation of the nothingness of mere reality without an immanent ideal.

This self-destruction of reality, which, as given, is of an entirely intellectual dialectical nature and is not immediately evident in a poetic and sensuous way, appears in two different forms. First, as disharmony between the interiority of the individual and the substratum of his actions; the more genuine is the interiority and the nearer its sources are to the ideas of life which, in the soul, have turned into ideals, the more clearly this disharmony will appear. Second, as the inability of the outside world, which is a stranger to ideals and an enemy of interiority, to achieve real completeness; an inability to find either the form of totality for itself as a whole, or any form of coherence for its own relationship to its elements and their relationship to one another: in other words, the outside world cannot be represented. Both the parts and the whole of such an outside world defy any forms of directly sensuous representation. They acquire life only when they can be related either to the life-experiencing interiority of the individual lost in their labyrinth, or to the observing and creative eye of the artist's subjectivity: when they become objects of mood or reflection.

This is the formal reason and the literary justification for the Romantics' demand that the novel, combining all genres within itself, should include pure lyric poetry and pure thought in its structure. The discrete nature of the outside world demands, for the sake of epic significance and sensuous valency, the inclusion of elements some of which are essentially alien to epic literature while others are alien to imaginative literature in general. The inclusion of these elements is not merely a question of lyrical atmosphere and intellectual significance being added to otherwise prosaic, isolated and inessential events. Only in these elements can the ultimate basis of the whole, the basis which holds the entire work together, become visible: the system of regulative ideas which constitutes the totality. For the discrete structure of the outside world is due, in the last analysis, to the fact that any system of ideas has only regulative power vis-à-vis reality. The incapacity of ideas to penetrate reality makes reality heterogeneous and discrete. And this incapacity creates a still more profound need for the elements of reality to have some definite relationship to a system of ideas than was the case in Dante's world. There, life and meaning were conferred upon each event by allocating to each its place in the world's architecture, just as directly as, in Homer's organic world, life and meaning were present with perfect immanence in every manifestation of life.

The inner form of the novel has been understood as the process of the problematic individual's journeying toward himself, the road from dull captivity within a merely present reality—a reality that is heterogeneous in itself and meaningless to the individual—toward clear self-recognition. After such self-recognition has been attained, the ideal thus formed irradiates the individual's life as its immanent meaning; but the conflict between what is and what

should be has not been abolished and cannot be abolished in the sphere wherein these events take place—the life sphere of the novel; only a maximum conciliation—the profound and intensive irradiation of a man by his life's meaning—is attainable. The immanence of meaning which the form of the novel requires lies in the hero's finding out through experience that a mere glimpse of meaning is the highest that life has to offer, and that this glimpse is the only thing worth the commitment of an entire life, the only thing by which the struggle will have been justified. The process of finding out extends over a lifetime, and its direction and scope are given with its normative content, the way toward a man's recognition of himself. The inner shape of the process and the most adequate means of shaping it—the biographical form—reveal the great difference between the discrete, unlimited nature of the material of the novel and the continuum-like infinity of the material of the epic. This lack of limits in the novel has a "bad" infinity about it: therefore it needs certain imposed limits in order to become form; whereas the infinity of purely epic matter is an inner, organic one, it is itself a carrier of value, it puts emphasis on value, it sets its own limits for itself and from within itself, and the outward infinity of its range is almost immaterial to it—only a consequence and, at most, a symptom.

The novel overcomes its "bad" infinity by recourse to the biographical form. On the one hand, the scope of the world is limited by the scope of the hero's possible experiences and its mass is organized by the orientation of his development toward finding the meaning of life in self-recognition; on the other hand, the discretely heterogeneous mass of isolated persons, non-sensuous structures and meaningless events receives a unified articulation by the relating of each separate element to the central character and the problem symbolized by the story of his life.

The beginning and the end of the world of a novel, which are determined by the beginning and end of the process which supplies the content of the novel, thus become significant landmarks along a clearly mapped road. The novel in itself and for itself is by no means bound to the natural beginning and end of life—to birth and death; yet by the points at which it begins and ends, it indicates the only essential segment of life, that segment which is determined by the central problem, and it touches upon whatever lies before or after that segment only in perspective and only as it relates to that problem; it tends to unfold its full epic totality only within that span of life which is essential to it.

When the beginning and the end of this segment of life do not coincide with those of a human life, this merely shows that the biographical form is oriented toward ideas: the development of a man is still the thread upon which the whole world of the novel is strung and along which it unrolls, but now this development acquires significance only because it is typical of that system of ideas and experienced ideals which regulatively determines the inner and outer world of the novel.

Wilhelm Meister's existence in literature stretches from the point at which his crisis in face of the given circumstances of his life becomes acute to the point at which he finds the profession which is appropriate to his essence;

but the underlying principle of this biographical structure is the same as in Pontoppidan's *Hans im Glück,* which begins with the hero's first significant childhood experience and ends with his death. In either case the stylization differs radically from that of the epic. In the epic, the central figure and its significant adventures are a mass organized in itself and for itself, so that the beginning and the end mean something quite different there, something essentially less important: they are moments of great intensity, homogeneous with other points which are the high points of the whole; they never signify anything more than the commencement or the resolution of great tensions.

Once more Dante's position is a special one; in Dante, principles of structuration which tend toward the novel are re-transformed back into the epic. The beginning and the end in Dante represent the decisive points of essential life, and everything that can acquire significance by having meaning conferred upon it takes place between those points; before the beginning there lay unredeemable chaos, after the end lies the no longer threatened certainty of redemption. But what is contained between the beginning and the end escapes the biographical categories of the process: it is the *eternally existent becoming* of ecstasy; whatever the novel might have taken hold of and structured is, in Dante, condemned to absolute inessentiality by the paramount significance of this experience.

The novel comprises the essence of its totality between the beginning and the end, and thereby raises an individual to the infinite heights of one who must create an entire world through his experience and who must maintain that world in equilibrium—heights which no epic individual, not even Dante's, could reach, because the epic individual owed his significance to the grace accorded him, not to his pure individuality. But just because the novel can only comprise the individual in this way, he becomes a mere instrument, and his central position in the work means only that he is particularly well suited to reveal a certain problematic of life.

The Historico-Philosophical Conditioning of the Novel and Its Significance

The composition of the novel is the paradoxical fusion of heterogeneous and discrete components into an organic whole which is then abolished over and over again. The relationships which create cohesion between the abstract components are abstractly pure and formal, and the ultimate unifying principle therefore has to be the ethic of the creative subjectivity, an ethic which the content reveals. But because this ethic must surmount itself so that the author's normative objectivity may be realized, and because it cannot, when all is said and done, completely penetrate the objects of form-giving, and therefore cannot completely rid itself of its subjectivity and so appear as the immanent meaning of the objective world—because of this, it needs a new ethical self-correction, again determined by the work's content, in order to achieve the "tact" which will create a proper balance. This interaction of two ethical complexes, their duality as to form and their unity in being given form, is the content of irony, which is the normative mentality of the novel. The novel is condemned to great complexity by the structure of its given nature. What

happens to an idea in the world of reality need not become the object of dialectical reflection in every kind of literary creation in which an idea is given form as reality. The relationship between idea and reality can be dealt with by means of purely sensuous form-giving, and then no empty space or distance is left between the two which would have to be filled with the author's consciousness and wisdom. Wisdom can be expressed through the act of form-giving: it can conceal itself behind the forms and does not necessarily have to surmount itself, as irony, in the work.

For the creative individual's reflection, the novelist's ethic vis-à-vis the content, is a double one. His reflection consists of giving form to what happens to the idea in real life, of describing the actual nature of this process and of evaluating and considering its reality. This reflection, however, in turn becomes an object for reflection; it is itself only an ideal, only subjective and postulative; it, too, has a certain destiny in a reality which is alien to it; and this destiny, now purely reflexive and contained within the narrator himself, must also be given form.

The need for reflection is the deepest melancholy of every great and genuine novel. Through it, the writer's naïveté suffers extreme violence and is changed into its opposite. (This is only another way of saying that pure reflection is profoundly inartistic.) And the hard-won equalization, the unstable balance of mutually surmounting reflections—the second naïveté, which is the novelist's objectivity—is only a formal substitute for the first: it makes form-giving possible and it rounds off the form, but the very manner in which it does so points eloquently at the sacrifice that has had to be made, at the paradise forever lost, sought and never found. This vain search and then the resignation with which it is abandoned make the circle that completes the form.

The novel is the form of mature virility: its author has lost the poet's radiant youthful faith "that destiny and soul are twin names for a single concept" (Novalis); and the deeper and more painful his need to set this most essential creed of all literature as a demand against life, the more deeply and painfully he must learn to understand that it is only a demand and not an effective reality. This insight, this irony, is directed both at his heroes, who, in their poetically necessary youthfulness, are destroyed by trying to turn his faith into reality, and against his own wisdom, which has been forced to see the uselessness of the struggle and the final victory of reality. Indeed, the irony is a double one in both directions. It extends not only to the profound hopelessness of the struggle but also to the still more profound hopelessness of its abandonment—the pitiful failure of the intention to adapt to a world which is a stranger to ideals, to abandon the unreal ideality of the soul for the sake of achieving mastery over reality. And whilst irony depicts reality as victorious, it reveals not only that reality is as nothing in face of its defeated opponent, not only that the victory of reality can never be a final one, that it will always, again and again, be challenged by new rebellions of the idea, but also that reality owes its advantage not so much to its own strength, which is too crude and directionless to maintain the advantage, as to the inner (although necessary) problematic of the soul weighed down by its ideals.

The melancholy of the adult state arises from our dual, conflicting experi-

ence that, on the one hand, our absolute, youthful confidence in an inner voice has diminished or died, and, on the other hand, that the outside world to which we now devote ourselves in our desire to learn its ways and dominate it will never speak to us in a voice that will clearly tell us our way and determine our goal. The heroes of youth are guided by the gods: whether what awaits them at the end of the road are the embers of annihilation or the joys of success, or both at once, they never walk alone, they are always led. Hence the deep certainty with which they proceed: they may weep and mourn, forsaken by everyone, on a desert island, they may stumble to the very gates of hell in desperate blindness, yet an atmosphere of security always surrounds them; a god always plots the hero's paths and always walks ahead of him.

Fallen gods, and gods whose kingdom is not yet, become demons; their power is effective and alive, but it no longer penetrates the world, or does not yet do so: the world has a coherence of meaning, a causality, which is incomprehensible to the vital, effective force of a god-become-demon; from the demon's viewpoint, the affairs of such a world appear purely senseless. The demon's power remains effective because it cannot be overthrown; the passing of the old god supports the being of the new; and for this reason the one possesses the same valency of reality (in the sphere of the only essential being, which is metaphysical being) as the other. "It was not divine," Goethe wrote about the demonic, "for it seemed irrational; it was not human, for it had no reason; not devilish, for it was beneficent; not angelic, for it often allowed room for malice. It resembled the accidental, for it was without consequence; it looked like providence, for it hinted at hidden connections. Everything that restricts us seemed permeable by it; it seemed to arrange at will the necessary elements of our existence; it contracted time, it expanded space. It seemed at ease only in the impossible, and it thrust the possible from itself with contempt."

But there is an essential aspiration of the soul which is concerned only with the essential, no matter where it comes from or where it leads; there is a nostalgia of the soul when the longing for home is so violent that the soul must, with blind impetuousness, take the first path that seems to lead there; and so powerful is this yearning that it can always pursue its road to the end. For such a soul, every road leads to the essence—leads home—for to this soul its selfhood *is* its home. That is why tragedy knows no real difference between God and demon, whereas, if a demon enters the domain of the epic at all, he has to be a powerless, defeated higher being, a deposed divinity. Tragedy destroys the hierarchy of the higher worlds; in it there is no God and no demon, for the outside world is only the occasion for the soul to find itself, for the hero to become a hero; in itself and for itself, it is neither perfectly nor imperfectly penetrated by meaning; it is a tangle of blind happenings, indifferent to objective existing forms of meaning. But the soul transforms every happening into destiny, and the soul alone does this for everyone. Only when the tragedy is over, when the dramatic meaning has become transcendent, do gods and demons appear on the stage; it is only in the drama of grace that the tabula rasa of the higher world is filled once more with superior and subordinate figures.

The novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God. The

novel hero's psychology is demonic; the objectivity of the novel is the mature man's knowledge that meaning can never quite penetrate reality, but that, without meaning, reality would disintegrate into the nothingness of inessentiality. These are merely different ways of saying the same thing. They define the productive limits of the possibilities of the novel—limits which are drawn from within—and, at the same time, they define the historico-philosophical moment at which great novels become possible, at which they grow into a symbol of the essential thing that needs to be said. The mental attitude of the novel is virile maturity, and the characteristic structure of its matter is discreteness, the separation between interiority and adventure.

"I go to prove my soul," says Browning's Paracelsus, and if the marvelous line is out of place it is only because it is spoken by a dramatic hero. The dramatic hero knows no adventure, for, through the force of his attained soul that is hallowed by destiny, the event which should have been his adventure becomes destiny upon the merest contact with that soul, becomes a simple occasion for him to prove himself, a simple excuse for disclosing what was prefigured in the act of his attaining the soul. The dramatic hero knows no interiority, for interiority is the product of the antagonistic duality of soul and world, the agonizing distance between psyche and soul; and the tragic hero has attained his soul and therefore does not know any hostile reality: everything exterior is, for him, merely an expression of a predetermined and adequate destiny. Therefore the dramatic hero does not set out to prove himself: he is a hero because his inner security is given a priori, beyond the reach of any test or proof; the destiny-forming event is, for him, only a symbolic objectivation, a profound and dignified ceremony.

(The essential inner stylelessness of modern drama, and of Ibsen in particular, derives from the fact that his major figures have to be tested, that they sense within themselves the distance between themselves and their soul, and, in their desperate desire to pass the tests with which events confront them, try to bridge that distance. The heroes of modern drama experience the preconditions of drama; the drama itself unfolds in the process of stylization which the dramatist should have completed, as a phenomenological precondition of his work, before beginning to write it.)

The novel tells of the adventure of interiority; the content of the novel is the story of the soul that goes to find itself, that seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them, and, by proving itself, to find its own essence. The inner security of the epic world excludes adventure in this essential sense: the heroes of the epic live through a whole variety of adventures, but the fact that they will pass the test, both inwardly and outwardly, is never in doubt; the world-dominating gods must always triumph over the demons ("the divinities of impediment," as Indian mythology calls them). Hence the passivity of the epic hero that Goethe and Schiller insisted on: the adventures that fill and embellish his life are the form taken by the objective and extensive totality of the world; he himself is only the luminous center around which this unfolded totality revolves, the inwardly most immobile point of the world's rhythmic movement. By contrast, the novel hero's passivity is not a necessity; it characterizes the hero's relationship to his soul and to the outside world. The novel

hero does not have to be passive: that is why his passivity has a specific psychological and sociological nature and represents a distinct type in the structural possibilities of the novel.

The novel hero's psychology is the field of action of the demonic. Biological and sociological life has a profound tendency to remain within its own immanence; men want only to live, structures want to remain intact; and because of the remoteness, the absence of an effective God, the indolent self-complacency of this quietly decaying life would be the only power in the world if men did not sometimes fall prey to the power of the demon and overreach themselves in ways that have no reason and cannot be explained by reason, challenging all the psychological or sociological foundations of their existence. Then, suddenly, the God-forsakenness of the world reveals itself as a lack of substance, as an irrational mixture of density and permeability. What previously seemed to be very solid crumbles like dry clay at the first contact with a man possessed by a demon, and the empty transparence behind which attractive landscapes were previously to be seen is suddenly transformed into a glass wall against which men beat in vain, like bees against a window, incapable of breaking through, incapable of understanding that the way is barred.

The writer's irony is a negative mysticism to be found in times without a god. It is an attitude of *docta ignorantia* toward meaning, a portrayal of the kindly and malicious workings of the demons, a refusal to comprehend more than the mere fact of these workings; and in it there is the deep certainty, expressible only by form-giving, that through not-desiring-to-know and not-being-able-to-know he has truly encountered, glimpsed and grasped the ultimate, true substance, the present, non-existent God. This is why irony is the objectivity of the novel.

"To what extent are a writer's characters objective?" asks Hebbel. "To the extent that man is free in his relationship to God." A mystic is free when he has renounced himself and is totally dissolved in God; a hero is free when, proud as Lucifer, he has achieved perfection in himself and out of himself; when, for the sake of his soul's free activity, he has banished all half-measures from the world whose ruler he has become because of his fall. Normative man has achieved freedom in his relationship to God because the lofty norms of his actions and of his substantial ethic are rooted in the existence of the all-perfecting God, are rooted in the idea of redemption, because they remain untouched in their innermost essence by whoever dominates the present, be he God or demon. But the realization of the normative in the soul or the work cannot be separated from its substratum which is the present (in the historico-philosophical sense), without jeopardizing its most specific strength, its constitutive relatedness with its object. Even the mystic who aspires to the experience of a final and unique Godhead outside all formed concepts of a God, and who achieves such an experience, is still tied to the present God of his time; and insofar as his experience is perfected and becomes a work, it is perfected within the categories prescribed by the historico-philosophical position of the world's clock. Thus his freedom is subject to a double categorical dialectic, a theoretical and a historico-philosophical one; that part of it which is the most specific essence of freedom—the constitutive relation to redemption—re-

mains inexpressible; everything that can be expressed and given form bears witness to this double servitude.

The detour by way of speech to silence, by way of category to essence, is unavoidable: when the historical categories are not sufficiently developed, the wish to achieve immediate silence must inevitably lead to mere stuttering. But when the form is perfectly achieved, the writer is free in relation to God because in such a form, and only in it, God himself becomes the substratum of form-giving, homogeneous with and equivalent to all the other normatively given elements of form, and is completely embraced by its system of categories. The writer's existence and its very quality are determined by the normative relationship which he as the form-giver has with the structural forms—by the value technically assigned to him for structuring and articulating the work. But such subsuming of God under the technical concept of the "material authenticity" of a form reveals the double face of an artistic creation and shows its true place in the order of metaphysically significant works: such perfect technical immanence has as its precondition a constitutive relationship (which is normatively, but not psychologically, a preliminary one) to ultimate transcendent existence. The reality-creating, transcendental form can only come into being when a true transcendence has become immanent within it. An empty immanence, which is anchored only in the writer's experience and not, at the same time, in his return to the home of all things, is merely the immanence of a surface that covers up the cracks but is incapable of retaining this immanence and must become a surface riddled with holes.

For the novel, irony consists in this freedom of the writer in his relationship to God, the transcendental condition of the objectivity of form-giving. Irony, with intuitive double vision, can see where God is to be found in a world abandoned by God; irony sees the lost, utopian home of the idea that has become an ideal, and yet at the same time it understands that the ideal is subjectively and psychologically conditioned, because that is its only possible form of existence; irony, itself demonic, apprehends the demon that is within the subject as a metasubjective essentiality, and therefore, when it speaks of the adventures of errant souls in an inessential, empty reality, it intuitively speaks of past gods and gods that are to come; irony has to seek the only world that is adequate to it along the via dolorosa of interiority, but is doomed never to find it there; irony gives form to the malicious satisfaction of God the creator at the failure of man's weak rebellions against his mighty, yet worthless creation and, at the same time, to the inexpressible suffering of God the redeemer at his inability to re-enter that world. Irony, the self-surmounting of a subjectivity that has gone as far as it was possible to go, is the highest freedom that can be achieved in a world without God. That is why it is not only the sole possible a priori condition for a true, totality-creating objectivity but also why it makes that totality—the novel—the representative art-form of our age: because the structural categories of the novel constitutively coincide with the world as it is today.

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Abstract Idealism

The abandonment of the world by God manifests itself in the incommensurability of soul and work, of interiority and adventure—in the absence of a transcendental "place" allotted to human endeavor. There are, roughly speaking, two types of such incommensurability: either the world is narrower or it is broader than the outside world assigned to it as the arena and substratum of its actions.

In the first case, the demonic character of the problematic individual setting out on his adventurous course is more clearly visible than in the second case, but, at the same time, his inner problematic is less sharply obvious; his failure in the face of reality looks at first glance like a merely outward failure. The demonism of the narrowing of the soul is the demonism of abstract idealism. It is the mentality which chooses the direct, straight path toward the realization of the ideal; which, dazzled by the demon, forgets the existence of any distance between ideal and idea, between psyche and soul; which, with the most authentic and unshakable faith, concludes that the idea, because it *should be,* necessarily *must be,* and, because reality does not satisfy this a priori demand, thinks that reality is bewitched by evil demons and that the spell can be broken and reality can be redeemed either by finding a magic password or by courageously fighting the evil forces.

The structure-determining problematic of this type of hero consists, therefore, in the complete absence of an inner problematic and, consequently, in the complete lack of any transcendental sense of space, i.e., of the ability to experience distances as realities.

Achilles or Odysseus, Dante or Arjuna—precisely because they are guided along their paths by gods—realize that if they lacked this guidance, if they were without divine help, they would be powerless and helpless in the face of mighty enemies. The relationship between the objective and subjective worlds is therefore maintained in adequate balance: the hero is rightly conscious of the superiority of the opposing outside world; yet despite this innermost modesty he can triumph in the end because his lesser strength is guided to victory by the highest power in the world; the forces of the imaginary and the real correspond with one another; the victories and defeats are not contradictory to either the actual or the ideal world order.

When this instinctive sense of distance, which is an essential factor in the complete life-immanence, in the "health" of the epic, is lacking, the relationship between the subjective and the objective worlds becomes paradoxical; because the active soul, the soul that matters from the point of view of the epic, is narrowed, the world—as the substratum of its actions—likewise becomes narrower for that soul than it is in reality. But since this reduction of the world and every action which follows from it and which is aimed only at the reduced world must fall short of the real center of the outside world, and since, too, such an attitude is of necessity a subjective one, leaving the essence of the world untouched and offering only a distorted image of it, all that opposes the soul must come from sources which are completely heterogeneous from it.

Thus action and opposition have neither scope nor quality—neither reality nor orientation—in common. Their relationship to one another is not one of true struggle but only of a grotesque failure to meet, or an equally grotesque clash conditioned by reciprocal misunderstandings. The narrowing of the soul of which we speak is brought about by its demonic obsession by an existing idea which it posits as the only, the most ordinary reality. The content and intensity of the actions which follow from this obsession therefore elevate the soul into the most genuinely sublime regions whilst at the same time accentuating and confirming the grotesque contradictions between the imagined and the real. And this is the action of the novel. The novel's discrete-heterogeneous nature is revealed here with maximum vividness; the sphere of the soul—of psychology—and the sphere of action no longer have anything whatsoever in common.

Furthermore, in neither of the two spheres is there an element of immanent progress or development, either within itself or arising from relationships with the other. The soul is at rest in the transcendent existence it has achieved on the far side of all problems; no doubts, no search, no despair can arise within it so as to take it out of itself and set it in motion. Its grotesque, vain struggles to realize itself in the outside world will not really touch such a soul; nothing can shake it in its inner certitude, because it is imprisoned in its safe world—because it is incapable of experiencing anything. The complete absence of an inwardly experienced problematic transforms such a soul into pure activity. Because it is at rest within its essential existence, every one of its impulses becomes an action aimed at the outside. The life of a person with such a soul becomes an uninterrupted series of adventures which he himself has chosen. He throws himself into them because life means nothing more to him than the successful passing of tests. His unquestioning, concentrated interiority forces him to translate that interiority—which he considers to be the average, everyday nature of the real world—into actions; in respect of this aspect of his soul he is incapable of any contemplation; he lacks any inclination or possibility of inward-turned activity. He has to be an adventurer. Yet the world he is obliged to choose as the arena for his adventures is a curious mixture of the richly organic, which is completely alien to ideas, and of those self-same ideas (the ideas which lead their purely transcendent life inside his soul) petrified into social convention. This is what makes it possible for his actions to be spontaneous and ideological at the same time: the world he finds is not only full of life, but also full of the semblance of the very life which exists inside him as the only essential life. However, this capacity of the world to be misunderstood is also the reason why he can so grotesquely act at cross-purposes with it: the semblance of an idea collapses in face of the absurd, petrified ideal, and the real nature of the existing world, the self-maintaining, organic life that is alien to all ideas, assumes its appropriate all-dominant position.

It is here that the ungodly, demonic character of such an obsession is most clearly revealed, but so also is its likewise demonic, confusing and fascinating resemblance to the divine. The hero's soul is at rest, rounded and complete within itself like a work of art or a divinity; but this mode of being can only express itself in the outside world by means of inadequate adventures which

contain no counter-force within them precisely because the hero is so maniacally imprisoned in himself; and this isolation, which makes the soul resemble a work of art, also separates it from all outside reality and from all those other areas of the soul which have not been seized by the demon. Thus a maximum of inwardly attained meaning becomes a maximum of senselessness and the sublime turns to madness, to monomania.

Such a structure of the soul completely atomizes the mass of possible actions. Because of the purely reflexive nature of the soul's interiority, outside reality remains quite untouched by it, and reveals itself "as it really is" only as an opposition to every one of the hero's actions. Nevertheless this outside reality is no more than a sluggish, formless, meaningless mass entirely lacking any capacity for planned and consistent counter-action, and the hero in his demonic search for adventure arbitrarily and disconnectedly selects those moments of this "reality" which he thinks most suitable for "proving himself." Thus the hero's psychological rigidity and the mass of action which has been atomized into a series of isolated adventures mutually determine one another and, as a result, clearly reveal the risk inherent in this type of novel: the risk of "bad" abstraction, "bad" infinity.

The reason why this danger is avoided in *Don Quixote,* the immortal objectivation of this type of hero, lies not only in Cervantes' genius and the extraordinary tact with which he overcomes the danger by means of the impenetrably deep yet radiantly sensuous interweaving of divinity with madness in Don Quixote's soul, but also in the historico-philosophical moment at which the work was written. It is more than a mere accident of history that *Don Quixote* was intended as a parody of the chivalrous novels, and its relation to them is more than an essayistic one. The chivalrous novel had succumbed to the fate of every epic that wants to maintain and perpetuate a form by purely formal means after the transcendental conditions for its existence have already been condemned by the historico-philosophical dialectic. The chivalrous novel had lost its roots in transcendent being, and the forms, which no longer had any immanent function, withered away, became abstract, because their strength, which had been intended for the creation of objects, was exhausted by its own objectlessness. The great epic was replaced by entertainment literature. Yet behind the empty shell of these dead forms there had once been a pure and genuine major art form, even if a problematic one: the chivalrous epic of the Middle Ages.

We have here the curious case of a novel form existing in a period whose absolute belief in God really encouraged the epic. It is the great paradox of the Christian universe that the fragmentariness, the normatively imperfect nature of earthly life, its enslavement by error and sin, is opposed by the eternally present theodicy of the life of the beyond. Dante succeeded in capturing this dual world-totality in the purely epic form of the *Divina Commedia.* Other epic writers, who remained on earth, had to leave the transcendent in a state of artificially untouched transcendence and so could only create sentimentally conceived life-totalities which were desired but which lacked any existing immanence of meaning. They created novels, not epics.

The unique quality of these novels, their dreamlike beauty and magic

grace, consists in the fact that all the seeking which is in them is, after all, only a semblance of seeking. Every errant step of their heroes is guided and made safe by an unfathomable, metaformal grace; distance, losing its objective reality, is turned into a darkly beautiful ornament, and the leap necessary to bridge it is turned into a dance-like gesture—both distance and leap are transformed into purely decorative elements. These novels are in substance vast fairy-tales, for in them transcendence is not captured, made immanent and absorbed in the object-creating, transcendental form, but remains in its undiluted transcendence; the shadow of transcendence decoratively fills the cracks of earthly life and turns the matter of life—because of the dynamic homogeneity of every true work of art—into a substance that is likewise woven out of shadows. In the Homeric epics the omnipotence of the purely human category of life embraced both men and gods and made purely human beings out of them. Here it is the elusive divine principle that dominates, with the same omnipotence, both the life of man and its need to go outside itself, to complement itself; and this creates a flatness, robs the human characters of all relief, transforms them into pure surface.

The safe, rounded irrationality of the entire cosmos, as reflected in these novels, makes the glimpsed shadow of God appear demonic: he cannot be comprehended and fitted into some kind of order from the perspective of earthly life, and therefore he cannot reveal himself as God. Nor is it possible, as it was in Dante—because these novels are centered on earthly life—to use God as the starting point for finding and uncovering the constitutive unity of all existence. The chivalrous novels against which *Don Quixote* was in the first place a polemic and which it parodied had lost the necessary transcendent relationship, and given this loss—unless everything, as in Ariosto, was to become pure, ironically elegant play—their mysterious and fairy-tale-like surfaces were bound to degenerate into banal superficiality. Cervantes' creative criticism of the triviality of the chivalrous novel leads us once more to the historico-philosophical sources of this genre. The subjectively incomprehensible, objectively secure existence of the idea is transformed into a subjectively clear, fanatically maintained existence, lacking any objective relationship. The God who, because of the inadequacy of the material enfolding him, could only appear as a demon, actually becomes a demon, arrogating to himself the role of God, in a world forsaken by providence and lacking transcendental orientation. This world is the same one which God had previously transformed into a dangerous but wonderful magic garden; now, turned into prose by evil demons, this world yearns to be transformed back again into a magic garden by faithful heroes. That which, in the fairy-tale, had only to be guarded against so as to preserve the beneficent spell, here becomes positive action, becomes a struggle for the existing paradise of a fairy-tale reality which awaits the redeeming word.

Thus the first great novel of world literature stands at the beginning of the time when the Christian God began to forsake the world; when man became lonely and could find meaning and substance only in his own soul, whose home was nowhere; when the world, released from its paradoxical anchorage in a beyond that is truly present, was abandoned to its immanent meaning-

lessness; when the power of what is—reinforced by the utopian links, now degraded to mere existence—had grown to incredible magnitude and was waging a furious, apparently aimless struggle against the new forces which were as yet weak and incapable of revealing themselves or penetrating the world. Cervantes lived in the period of the last, great and desperate mysticism, the period of a fanatical attempt to renew the dying religion from within; a period of a new view of the world rising up in mystical forms; the last period of truly lived but already disoriented, tentative, sophisticated, occult aspirations.

It was the period of the demons let loose, a period of great confusion of values in the midst of an as yet unchanged value system. And Cervantes, the faithful Christian and naïvely loyal patriot, creatively exposed the deepest essence of this demonic problematic: the purest heroism is bound to become grotesque, the strongest faith is bound to become madness, when the ways leading to the transcendental home have become impassable; reality does not have to correspond to subjective evidence, however genuine and heroic. The profound melancholy of the historical process, of the passing of time, speaks through this work, telling us that even a content and an attitude which are eternal must lose their meaning when their time is past: that time brushes aside even the eternal. *Don Quixote* is the first great battle of interiority against the prosaic vulgarity of outward life, and the only battle in which interiority succeeded, not only to emerge unblemished from the fray, but even to transmit some of the radiance of its triumphant, though admittedly self-ironizing, poetry to its victorious opponent.

Don Quixote—like almost any truly great novel—had to remain the only important objectivation of its type. This particular mixture of poetry and irony, the sublime and the grotesque, divinity and monomania, was so strongly bound up with the historical moment that the same type of mental structure was bound to manifest itself differently at other times and was never again to reach the same epic significance. The adventure novels which took over its purely artistic form became just as devoid of ideas as its immediate predecessors, the chivalrous novels. They, too, lost the only fruitful tension—a transcendental one—and either replaced it by a purely social tension or simply found the motivation for action in a spirit of adventure for adventure's sake. In either case, and despite the genuinely great talent of some of the writers involved, an ultimate triviality, an ever-increasing similarity between the great novel and the entertainment novel, and the final merging of the two could not be avoided. As the world becomes more and more prosaic, as the active demons withdraw from the world leaving the arena free to the dull opposition of an inchoate mass to any kind of interiority, the demonically narrowed soul faces a new dilemma: either it must give up all relationship to life or it must lose its immediate roots in the true world of ideas.

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The Romanticism of Disillusionment

In the nineteenth-century novel, the other type of the necessarily inadequate relation between soul and reality became the more important one: the inade-

quacy that is due to the soul's being wider and larger than the destinies which life has to offer it. The decisive structural difference is that here we are not dealing with an abstract a priori condition on the face of life, a condition which seeks to realize itself in action and therefore provokes conflicts with the outside world which make up the story of the novel; but rather a purely interior reality which is full of content and more or less complete in itself enters into competition with the reality of the outside world, leads a rich and animated life of its own and, with spontaneous self-confidence, regards itself as the only true reality, the essence of the world: and the failure of every attempt to realize this equality is the subject of the work.

Thus we have here a concrete, qualitative a priori attitude vis-à-vis the world—a matter of content, a struggle between two worlds, not a struggle between reality and a general a priori state. But this makes the divergence between interiority and the outside world even stronger. When the interiority is like a cosmos, it is self-sufficient, at rest within itself. Whereas abstract idealism, in order to exist at all, had to translate itself into action, had to enter into conflict with the outside world, here the possibility of escape does not seem excluded from the start. A life which is capable of producing all its content out of itself can be rounded and perfect even if it never enters into contact with the alien reality outside. Whereas, therefore, an excessive, totally uninhibited activity toward the outside world was characteristic of the psychological structure of abstract idealism, here the tendency is rather toward passivity, a tendency to avoid outside conflicts and struggles rather than to engage in them, a tendency to deal inside the soul with everything that concerns the soul.

In this possibility lies the central problematic of this type of novel: the disappearance of epic symbolization, the disintegration of form in a nebulous and unstructured sequence of moods and reflections about moods, the replacement of a sensuously meaningful story by psychological analysis. This problematic is further intensified by the fact that, given the relationship between the two, the outside world which comes into contact with such an interiority has to be completely atomized or amorphous, and in any case must be entirely devoid of meaning. It is a world entirely dominated by convention, the full realization of the concept of a "second nature"; a quintessence of meaningless laws in which no relation to the soul can be found. And this means that all formal objectivations of social life lose all significance for the soul. They do not retain even their paradoxical significance as being the necessary arena and vehicle of events whilst having no essence at the core. Thus, a character's profession loses all importance from the point of view of his inner destiny, just as marriage, family and class become immaterial to the relationships between characters. Don Quixote would be unthinkable as anything other than a knight, but the story of his love is unimaginable without the troubadours' convention of adoration of the woman; in *The Human Comedy,* the demonic obsession of all the characters is concentrated and objectified in the structures of social life; in Pontoppidan's novel, even though the social structures are unmasked as inessential for the soul, it is nevertheless the struggle concerning them—the recognition of their inessentiality and the effort to reject them—that fills the hero's life and the novel's action. In the type of novel which we

are now considering, all the relationships have ceased to exist from the start. The elevation of interiority to the status of a completely independent world is not only a psychological fact but also a decisive value judgment on reality; this self-sufficiency of the subjective self is its most desperate self-defense; it is the abandonment of any struggle to realize the soul in the outside world, a struggle which is seen a priori as hopeless and merely humiliating.

This attitude is so intensely lyrical that it is no longer capable of purely lyrical expression. Lyrical subjectivity has to go for its symbols to the outside world; even if that world has been made by subjectivity itself, it is nevertheless the only possible one; subjectivity, as an interiority, never confronts in a polemical or negative way the outside world that is co-ordinated to it, it never takes refuge inside itself in an effort to forget the outside world; rather, it proceeds as an arbitrary conqueror, it snatches fragments out of the atomized chaos which is the outside world and melts them down—causing all origins to be forgotten—into a newly created, lyrical cosmos of pure interiority. Epic interiority, by contrast, is always reflexive, it realizes itself in a conscious, distantiated way in contrast to the naïve distancelessness of true lyricism. Therefore its means of expression are secondary ones—mood and reflection—which, despite some apparent similarities to those of pure lyricism, have nothing whatever to do with the essence of the latter. Reflection and mood are constitutive structural elements of the novel form, but their formal significance is determined precisely by the fact that the regulative system of ideas on which the whole reality is based can manifest itself in them and is given form through their mediation; in other words, by the fact that they have a positive, although problematical and paradoxical, relationship to the outside world. When they become an end in themselves, their unpoetic and form-destructive character becomes clearly obvious.

This aesthetic problem, however, is at root an ethical one, and its artistic solution therefore presupposes, in accordance with the formal laws of the novel, that a solution has been found to the ethical problem. The hierarchical question of whether inner reality is superior to outer reality or vice versa is the ethical problem of utopia: the question whether the ability to imagine a better world can be ethically justified, and the question whether this ability can serve as the starting point for a life that is rounded in itself, not one which, as Hamann says, has been stopped by having a hole put in it instead of coming to an end. From the point of view of epic form the problem can be posed as follows: can this rounded correction of reality be translated into actions which, regardless of outward failure or success, prove the individual's right to self-sufficiency—actions which do not compromise the mental attitude from which they sprang? To create, by purely artistic means, a reality which corresponds to this dream world, or at least is more adequate to it than the existing one, is only an illusory solution. The utopian longing of the soul is a legitimate desire, worthy of being the center of a world, only if it is absolutely incapable of being satisfied in the present intellectual state of man, that is to say incapable of being satisfied in any world that can be imagined and given form, whether past, present or mythical. If a world can be found that satisfies the longing, this only proves that the dissatisfaction with the present was merely

an artistic quibbling over its outward forms, an aesthetic hankering after times when the artist could draw with more generous lines or paint with brighter colors than today. Such longings can indeed be satisfied, but their inner emptiness becomes apparent in the work's lack of idea, as is, for instance, the case with Walter Scott's novels, well-told though they are.

The flight from the present is of no use whatever in solving the central difficulty. The same problems—often giving rise to a profound dissonance between behavior and soul, between outward destiny and inner fate—are evident in distantiated works, whether monumental or decorative. *Salammbô* or C. F. Meyer's novels (which are, it is true, designed as novellas) are characteristic examples of this. The aesthetic problem, the transformation of mood and reflection, of lyricism and psychology into genuinely epic means of expression is therefore centered on the fundamental ethical problem—the question of necessary and possible action. The human type of the central character in works of this kind is in essence a contemplative rather than an active one, and so the epic representation of such a type is faced with the problem of how his rhapsodically retiring or hesitant behavior can be translated into action; the artistic task consists of revealing the point at which such a character's *being-there* and *being-thus* coincides with his inevitable failure.

The completely pre-determined nature of this failure is the other objective difficulty of purely epic form-giving. The danger of a subjectively lyrical attitude toward events, instead of a normatively epic attitude of absorption and reproduction, is much greater when fatality is predetermined—whether this fatality is affirmed or negated, lamented or scorned—than when the outcome of the struggle has not been decided in advance. The mood which carries and nourishes such lyricism is the mood of disillusioned romanticism, an over-intensified, over-determined desire for an ideal life as opposed to the real one, a desperate recognition of the fact that this desire is doomed to remain unsatisfied, a utopia based from the start on an uneasy conscience and the certainty of defeat. And the decisive feature of this certainty is its inseparable connection with moral conscience, the evidence that failure is a necessary consequence of its own inner structure, that it is, in its finest essence and highest value, condemned to death. That is why the attitude both toward the hero and toward the outside world is a lyrical one, compounded of love and accusation, of sorrow, pity and scorn.

The inner importance of the individual has reached its historical apogee: the individual is no longer significant as the carrier of transcendent worlds, as he was in abstract idealism; he now carries his value exclusively within himself indeed, the values of being seem to draw the justification of their validity only from the fact of having been subjectively experienced, from their significance to the individual's soul.

> Si l'arche est vide où tu pensais trouver la loi,
> Rien n'est réel que ta danse:
> Puisqu'elle n'a pas d'objet, elle est impérissable.
> Danse pour le désert et danse pour l'espace.
>
> Henri Franck

The precondition and the price of this immoderate elevation of the subject is, however, the abandonment of any claim to participation in the shaping of the outside world. The romanticism of disillusionment not only followed abstract idealism in time and history, it was also conceptually its heir, the next historico-philosophical step in a priori utopianism. There, the individual, the vehicle of the utopian challenge to reality, was crushed by the brute force of reality; here, defeat is the precondition of subjectivity. There, subjectivity gave rise to the heroism of militant interiority; here, a man can become the hero, the central figure of a literary work, because he has the inner possibility of experiencing life as a literary creator. There, the outside world was to be created anew on the model of ideals; here, an interiority which perfects itself in the form of a literary work demands from the outside world that it should provide it with suitable material for thus forming itself. In Romanticism, the literary nature of the a priori status of the soul vis-à-vis reality becomes conscious: the self, cut off from transcendence, recognizes itself as the source of the ideal reality, and, as a necessary consequence, as the only material worthy of self-realization. Life becomes a work of literature; but, as a result, man becomes the author of his own life and at the same time the observer of that life as a created work of art. Such duality can only be given form by lyrical means. As soon as it is fitted into a coherent totality, the certainty of failure becomes manifest; the romanticism becomes skeptical, disappointed and cruel toward itself and the world; the novel of the Romantic sense of life is the novel of disillusionment. An interiority denied the possibility of fulfilling itself in action turns inward, yet cannot finally renounce what it has lost forever; even if it wanted to do so, life would deny it such a satisfaction; life forces it to continue the struggle and to suffer defeats which the artist anticipates and the hero apprehends.

This situation gives rise to a romantic lack of moderation in all directions. The inner wealth of pure soul-experience is seen immoderately as the only essential thing; the futility of the soul's existence in the totality of the world is exposed with an equally immoderate ruthlessness; the soul's loneliness, its lack of any support or tie, is intensified until it becomes immeasurable, and, at the same time, the cause of this condition of the soul in a specific world situation is mercilessly revealed. Compositionally speaking, a maximum of continuity is aimed at, since existence is possible only within a subjectivity that is uninterrupted by any outside factor or event; yet reality disintegrates into a series of mutually absolutely heterogeneous fragments which have no independent valency of existence even in isolation, as do the adventures of Don Quixote. All the fragments live only by the grace of the mood in which they are experienced, but the totality reveals the nothingness of this mood in terms of reflection. And so everything has to be denied, for any affirmation will destroy the precarious balance of forces: affirmation of the outside world would justify the mindless philistines who accommodate themselves to reality, and the resulting work would be no more than cheap, slick satire; straightforward affirmation of romantic interiority would give rise to formless wallowing in vain, self-worshipping lyrical psychologism. But the outside world and the interiority are too heterogeneous, too hostile to one another to be simultaneously

affirmed, as can happen in novels that overlap into the epic. The only way left is to deny them both, and this merely renews and potentiates the fundamental danger of this type of novel—that of the form becoming dissolved in dreary pessimism. The purely artistic consequences of such a situation are inevitably, on the one hand, the disintegration of all secure and unconditional human values and the revelation of their ultimate nullity, and, on the other hand, the overall dominance of mood, that is to say of impotent sorrow over a world which is inessential in itself and which has only the ineffective, monotonous brilliance of a surface in process of decomposition.

Any form must contain some positive element in order to acquire substance as a form. The paradoxical nature of the novel is most strikingly revealed in the fact that the world situation and the human type which most closely correspond to its formal requirements—for which it is the only adequate form—confront the writer with almost insoluble problems. Jacobsen's novel of disillusionment, which expresses in wonderful lyrical images the author's melancholy over a world "in which there's so much that is senselessly exquisite," breaks down and disintegrates completely; and the author's attempt to find a desperate positiveness in Niels Lyhne's heroic atheism, his courageous acceptance of his necessary loneliness, strikes us as an aid brought in from outside the actual work. This hero's life which was meant to become a work of literature and is instead only a poor fragment, is actually transformed into a pile of débris by the form-giving process; the cruelty of disillusionment devalues the lyricism of the moods, but it cannot endow the characters and events with substance or with the gravity of existence. The novel remains a beautiful yet unreal mixture of voluptuousness and bitterness, sorrow and scorn, but not a unity; a series of images and aspects, but not a life totality.

Goncharov's attempt to fit the magnificently, truly and profoundly seen character of Oblomov into a totality by introducing a positive counter-figure was likewise doomed to failure. The memorable recurring image of Oblomov lying on his bed—an image which forcefully and sensually conveys the passivity of this type of character—cannot save the work as a whole. In face of the depth of Oblomov's tragedy—Oblomov whose innermost experience is so direct and bears so exclusively on essential things, yet who has to fail so abysmally whenever he is confronted with the smallest manifestation of outward reality—in face of this the triumphant happiness of Stolz, his "strong" friend, becomes trivial and flat. At the same time, Stolz has just enough real strength and weight to reduce Oblomov's fate to pettiness; the terrifying comic quality of the divorce between interior and exterior, symbolized by Oblomov lying on his bed, increasingly loses its created depth and greatness as the real action of the novel proceeds—namely, Stolz's attempt to re-educate Oblomov and the failure of that attempt. Oblomov's tragi-comic destiny is increasingly reduced to the indifferent fate of a character doomed to failure from the start.

The greatest discrepancy between idea and reality is time: the process of time as duration. The most profound and most humiliating impotence of subjectivity consists not so much in its hopeless struggle against the lack of idea in social forms and their human representatives, as in the fact that it cannot resist the sluggish, yet constant progress of time; that it must slip down,

slowly yet inexorably, from the peaks it has laboriously scaled; that time—that ungraspable, invisibly moving substance—gradually robs subjectivity of all its possessions and imperceptibly forces alien contents into it. That is why only the novel, the literary form of the transcendent homelessness of the idea, includes real time—Bergson's *durée*—among its constitutive principles. In another context[2] I have pointed out that the drama does not know the concept of time: it is subject to the three unities and, provided these are properly understood, the unity of time signifies a state of being lifted out of the duration of time. The epic, it is true, appears to allow for the duration of time—we need only think of the ten years of the Iliad or of the Odyssey. Yet this time has as little reality, as little real duration, as time has in drama; men and destinies remain untouched by it; it has a dynamic of its own, and its function is solely to express the greatness of an enterprise or of a tension in a meaningful way. The years are necessary to make the listener understand the real meaning of the capture of Troy and the wanderings of Odysseus, just as the large number of warriors or the vast areas traveled are necessary for the same purpose. But the heroes do not experience time within the work itself; time does not affect their inner changes or changelessness; their age is assimilated in their characters, and Nestor is old just as Helen is beautiful or Agamemnon mighty. It is true that the characters of the epic know life's painful lesson of growing old and dying, but to them it is mere knowledge, mere recognition; what they experience and the way they experience it has the blissful time-removed quality of the world of gods. The normative attitude toward the epic, according to Goethe and Schiller, is an attitude assumed toward something completely in the past; therefore its time is static and can be taken in at a single glance. The author of an epic and his characters can move freely in any direction inside it; like all space, it has several dimensions but no direction. And the normative present tense of the drama, likewise laid down by Goethe and Schiller, transforms time into space (as Gurnemanz says). Only the complete disorientedness of modern literature poses the impossible task of representing development and the gradual passing of time in dramatic terms.

Time can become constitutive only when the bond with the transcendental home has been severed. Just as ecstasy elevates the mystic into a sphere where all duration and all passing of time have ceased and from which he must fall back into the world of time only because of his creaturely, organic limitations, so any close and visible connection with the essence creates a cosmos which is a priori exempt from this necessity. Only in the novel, whose very matter is seeking and failing to find the essence, is time posited together with the form: time is the resistance of the organic—which possesses a mere semblance of life—to the present meaning, the will of life to remain within its own completely enclosed immanence. In the epic the life-immanence of meaning is so strong that it abolishes time: life enters eternity as life, the organic retains nothing of time except the phase of blossoming; fading and dying are forgotten and left entirely behind. In the novel, meaning is separated from life, and hence the essential from the temporal; we might almost say that the entire inner action of the novel is nothing but a struggle against the power of time.

In the Romanticism of disillusionment, time is the corrupting principle: poetry, the essential, must die, and time is ultimately responsible for its passing. That is why in such novels all value is on the side of the defeated protagonist, who, because he is dying, is endowed with the beauty of wounded youth, while coarseness, harshness, the absence of an idea, belong entirely to time. Only as a post-facto correction of this one-sided lyrical opposition to the victorious power does self-irony turn against the dying essence by endowing it, negatively, with the attributes of youth; the ideal is said to be constitutive only for the soul in a state of immaturity. The overall design of the novel is bound to be deformed if positive and negative values are so distinctly divided between the two sides of the struggle. A form cannot really deny a life principle unless it is capable of excluding it a priori from its realm; as soon as it has to admit that principle, it must admit it as positive; and so this principle, not only as an opposing force but in its own right, becomes a precondition of the realization of value.

Time is the fullness of life, although the fullness of time is the self-abolition of life and, with it, of time itself. The positive thing, the affirmation which the very form of the novel expresses no matter how inconsolably sad its content may be, is not only that distant meaning which dawns with a mild radiance on the far side of the search and the failure to find, but also the fullness of life which is revealed precisely through the manifold failures of the struggle and search. The novel is the form of mature virility: its song of comfort rings out of the dawning recognition that traces of lost meaning are to be found everywhere; that the enemy comes from the same lost home as the knight and defender of the essence; that life had to lose its immanence of meaning so that it might be equally present everywhere.

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From

The Historical Novel

Historical Novel and Historical Drama

Our argument may now prompt the following question: given the historical basis of the new historicism in art, why did the latter produce the historical novel and not the historical drama?

An answer to this question requires a serious and detailed examination of the relation of both genres to history. The first thing one realizes is that really historical and fully artistic historical dramas existed long before this period, whereas most of the so-called historical novels of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have no significance either as reflections of historical reality or as art. Even quite apart from French classicism and the bulk of Spanish drama, it is obvious that both Shakespeare and a number of his contemporaries produced real and important historical dramas, e.g., Marlowe's *Edward II,* Ford's *Perkin Warbeck,* etc. In addition there comes, at the end of the eighteenth century, the second great flowering of historical drama in the early work and the Weimar period of Goethe and Schiller. All these dramas are not only of an incomparably higher artistic order than the so-called precursors of the classical historical novel, but are also historical in quite a different, deep and genuine sense. On the other hand, one must also point out that the new historical art beginning with Scott only very rarely produces really important works in the field of drama, above all Pushkin's *Boris Godunov,* Manzoni's dramas, etc. The artistic flowering of the new, historical conception of reality is concentrated in the novel and, apart from that, only in the long story.

In order to understand this uneven development we must establish the difference between the drama's and the novel's relationship to history. This question is complicated by the fact that in modern times a very considerable interaction has occurred between drama and novel. Naturally, there are close connections between great epic and tragedy; it is no accident that Aristotle should have already pointed this out. But in classical times Homeric epic and classical tragedy belong to quite different epochs and, however related they may be in certain fundamental questions affecting content and form, their formal paths nevertheless diverge very clearly. Classical drama arises out of the epic world. The historical growth of social antagonisms in life produces tragedy as the genre of portrayed conflict.

This historical and formal relationship changes a great deal in modern times. The flowering of drama precedes the great development of the novel, despite Cervantes and Rabelais, despite the not unimportant influence of the Italian *novella* on Renaissance drama. On the other hand modern drama—including that of the Renaissance, even of Shakespeare—has from the outset certain stylistic tendencies which in the course of development take it ever-

more in the direction of the novel. And conversely, the dramatic element in the modern novel, particularly in Scott and Balzac, though arising primarily from the concrete historical and social needs of the time, is nevertheless by no means uninfluenced artistically by the preceding development of drama. Shakespearean drama, in particular, as Mikhail Lifschitz rightly pointed out in the discussion on the theory of the novel, exercised a decisive influence on the development of the modern novel. This connection between Scott and Shakespeare was clearly recognized already by Friedrich Hebbel, who saw Scott as the modern successor of Shakespeare. "What of Shakespeare came alive again in England was manifested in Walter Scott . . . for he combined the most admirable instinct for the basic conditions of all historical circumstances with the most subtle psychological insight into each individual characteristic and the most lucid understanding for the moment of transition, in which general and particular motives coincide, and it was to the combination of these three qualities that Prospero's wand owed its omnipotence and irresistibility."

But this extensive and complex historical interlocking of the two genres—which after all did not develop in a vacuum, metaphysically separated from one another—should not obscure the fundamental divisions between them. One has thus to return to the basic differences of form between drama and novel, uncovering their source in life itself, in order to comprehend the differences of both genres in their relationship to history. Only if we begin here can we understand the historical developments in both genres—emergence, flowering, decline, etc.—historically and aesthetically.

Facts of Life Underlying the Division between Epic and Drama. Both tragedy and great epic—epic and novel—present the objective, *outer* world; they present the inner life of man only insofar as his feelings and thoughts manifest themselves in deeds and actions, in a visible interaction with objective, outer reality. This is the decisive dividing line between epic and drama, on the one hand, and lyric, on the other. Further, great epic and drama both give a *total picture* of objective reality. This distinguishes them both as regards form and content from the other epic genres, of which the *Novelle* in particular has become important in modern development. Epic and novel are distinguished from all other minor varieties of the epic by this idea of totality: the difference is not a quantitative one of extent, but a qualitative one of artistic style, artistic form, a difference which informs all the individual moments of the given work.

However, the important difference between dramatic and epic form must be mentioned forthwith: there can be only one "total" genre in drama. There is no dramatic form to correspond to the *Novelle,* ballad, tale, etc. The one-act plays which appear from time to time and were looked upon as a special genre at the end of the nineteenth century mostly lack real dramatic elements. Since the drama had become a loosely composed narrative, broken up into dialogue, it was an easy step to turn the shorter *Novelle* type of sketch into a scene with dialogue. But the decisive question is of course not one of mere form; just as the difference between novel and *Novelle* is not one of extent.

From the standpoint of a really dramatic portrayal of life Pushkin's short dramatic scenes are complete and finished dramas. For their brevity of extent is that of the uttermost dramatic concentration of content and outlook; they have no connection with the modern episode in dialogue form.

We have only the problem of tragedy to deal with here. (In comedy the problem is somewhat different for reasons which cannot be explained here.) This affinity between epic and drama is emphasized by Aristotle, when he says: "He, therefore, who is a judge of the beauties and defects of tragedy is, of course, equally a judge with respect to those of epic poetry."

Tragedy and great epic thus both lay claim to portraying the totality of the life-process. It is obvious in both cases that this can only be a result of artistic structure, of formal concentration in the artistic reflection of the most important features of objective reality. For obviously the real, substantial, infinite and extensive totality of life can only be reproduced mentally in a relative form.

This relativity, however, acquires a peculiar form in the artistic reflection of reality. For to become art, it must never appear to be relative. A purely intellectual reflection of facts or laws of objective reality may openly admit this relativity and must in fact do so, for if any form of knowledge pretends to be absolute, ignoring the dialectical character of the merely relative, i.e., incomplete, reproduction of the infinity of objective reality, it is inevitably falsified and distorts the picture. It is quite different with art. Obviously, no literary character can contain the infinite and inexhaustible wealth of features and reactions to be found in life itself. But the nature of artistic creation consists in the ability of this relative, incomplete image to appear like life itself, indeed in a more heightened, intense and alive form than in objective reality.

This general paradox of art is sharpened in those genres which are compelled by their content and form to appear as living images of the totality of life. And this is what tragedy and great epic must do. They owe their deep effect, their central and epoch-making importance in the entire cultural life of mankind to their ability to arouse this feeling in the recipient. If they have been unable to do so, they have completely failed. No naturalist authenticity of individual manifestations of life, no formalist "mastery" of structure or individual effects can replace this feeling of the totality of life.

It is clear that the immediate question here is a formal one. But the absolute appearance of the relative image of life must, of course, be founded on content. It requires a real grasp of the essential and most important normative connections of life, in the destiny of individuals and society. It is just as clear, however, that the mere knowledge of these essential connections can never suffice. These essential features and all-important laws of life must appear in a new immediacy as the unique personal features and connections of concrete human beings and concrete situations. To achieve this new immediacy to re-individualize the general in man and his destiny is the mission of artistic form.

The specific problem of form in great epic and tragedy is to give this immediacy to the totality of life, to conjure up a world of illusion which requires—even in the most extensive epic—a very limited number of men and human destinies to arouse the feeling of the totality of life.

Aesthetic theory of the post-1848 period failed any longer to understand problems of form in this wide sense. Where it did not nihilistically and relativistically deny all distinction between forms, it simply classified them in an external, formalist way according to their superficial distinguishing marks. We have to go to classical German aesthetics to find these questions dealt with in their real essentials, though of course the Enlightenment pioneered many important individual questions.

The most fundamental and profound definition of the difference between totality in epic and totality in drama is to be found in Hegel's aesthetics. Hegel lays down as the first requirement of the world of epic the "totality of objects which" is created "for the sake of connecting the particular action with its substantial basis." Hegel stresses sharply and rightly that this does not mean an autonomous object-world. If the epic poet makes the object-world autonomous, then it loses all poetic value. In poetry things are important, interesting and attractive only as objects of human activity, as transmitters of relations between human beings and human destinies. But in epic they are there neither as decorative background nor as technical instruments for directing the action, of no real interest in themselves. An epic work which presents only the inner life of man with no living interaction with the objects forming his social and historical environment must dissolve into an artistic vacuum without contours or substance.

The truth and depth of Hegel's definition lies in the emphasis on interaction, in the fact that the "totality of objects," represented by the epic poet, is the totality of a stage of historical development in human society; and that human society cannot possibly be represented in its entirety, unless the foundations encompassing it, the surrounding world of things forming the object of its activity, is also represented. Hence things precisely because they depend on, and are permanently related to, the activity of men not only become important and significant, but thereby acquire their artistic independence as objects of representation. The demand for a "totality of objects" in epic is essentially a demand for an artistic image of human society which produces and reproduces itself in the same way as the daily process of life.

Drama, too, as we already know, aims at a total embodiment of the life-process. This totality, however, is concentrated round a firm center, round the dramatic collision. It is an artistic image of the system, so to speak, of those human aspirations which, in their mutual conflict, participate in this central collision. "Dramatic action," says Hegel, "therefore rests essentially upon colliding actions, and true unity can have its basis only in *total movement* [my italics, G.L.]. The collision, in accordance with whatever the particular circumstances, characters and aims, should turn out to conform so very much to the aims and characters, as to cancel out its contradiction. The solution must then be like the action itself, at once subjective and objective."

Hegel hereby counterposes "totality of movement" in drama to "totality of objects" in epic. What does this mean with regard to epic and dramatic form? Let us try to illustrate this difference with a notable historical example. In *King Lear* Shakespeare creates the greatest and most moving tragedy of the break-up of the family qua human community known to world literature. No

one can come away from this work without a sense of all-embracing totality. But by what means is this impression of totality achieved? Shakespeare portrays in the relations of Lear and his daughters, Gloster and his sons, the great typical, human moral movements and trends, which spring in an extremely heightened form from the problematicalness and break-up of the feudal family. These extreme and—in their very extremity—typical movements form a completely closed system, the dialectics of which exhaust all the possible human attitudes to the collision. It would be impossible to add a further link to this system, a further avenue of movement, without committing a psychological and moral tautology. This psychological richness of the contending characters grouped around the collision, the exhaustive totality with which, complementing one another, they reflect all the possibilities of this collision, produces the "totality of movement" in the play.

What, however, is *not* included here? The entire life surroundings of parents and children is missing, the material basis of the family, its growth, decline, etc. One need only compare this play with the great family portraits depicting the "problematic" of the family in an epic manner—e.g., Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks,* Gorky's *House of Artamonov.* What breadth and abundance here of the real circumstances of family life, what generalization there of the purely human moral qualities, the wills which can be brought into collision! Indeed, Shakespeare's extraordinary art of dramatic generalization is to be admired because he embodies the older generation of the family only through Lear and Gloster. Had he provided either Lear or Gloster or both with a wife, which an epic writer would certainly have had to do, he would have had either to weaken the concentration round the collision (if the conflict with the children had produced a conflict between the parents) or the wife would have been a dramatic tautology—she could only have served as a diminishing echo of her husband. It is characteristic of the rarefied atmosphere of dramatic generalization that this tragedy affects the beholder as a moving spectacle and that the question of the missing wives, for instance, simply does not arise. Whereas in a corresponding epic work a situation of this kind with two such parallel destinies would inevitably appear contrived and would need to be specially argued, if it could be convincingly argued at all. This analysis could naturally be extended to the portrayal of the smallest detail. What is important for us here is to bring out the contrast in its general outlines.

By concentrating the reflection of life upon a great collision, by grouping all manifestations of life round this collision and permitting them to live themselves out only in relation to the collision, drama simplifies and generalizes the possible attitudes of men to the problems of their lives. The portrayal is reduced to the typical representation of the most important and most characteristic attitudes of men, to what is indispensable to the dynamic working-out of the collision, to those social, human and moral *movements* in men, therefore, out of which the collision arises and which the collision dissolves. Any figure, any psychological feature of a figure, which goes beyond the dialectical necessity of this connection, of the dynamics of the collision, must be superfluous from the point of view of the drama. Hence, Hegel is right to describe a composition which resolves itself in this way as the "totality of movement."

How rich and broad this typicality is depends on the phase of historical development to which the drama belongs and, within this phase, obviously on the individuality of the dramatist.

Yet most important of all is the inner, objective dialectic of the collision itself which as it were, independently of the dramatist's consciousness, circumscribes the "totality of movement." Let us take, for instance, the *Antigone* of Sophocles. Creon has decreed that Polyneices shall not be buried. Given this situation the dramatic collision requires two, but only two, sisters of Polyneices. Were Antigone the only sister, then her heroic resistance to the king's decree might give the impression of a socially average and matter-of-course reaction. The figure of her sister, Ismene, is vital in order to show that Antigone's action is indeed a heroic and matter-of-course expression of an earlier morality which has already perished, but which in the present circumstances of the drama is no longer a spontaneously matter-of-course reaction. Ismene condemns Creon's prohibition just as Antigone does, but she demands of her heroic sister that, as the weaker one, she should submit to the power of authority. It is, I believe, just as obvious that without Ismene Antigone's tragedy would not be convincing, that it would not be an artistic image of the social-historical totality, as it is that a third sister would be dramatically a pure tautology.

Lessing, therefore, in his polemic against the *tragédie classique* is absolutely right in stressing that Shakespeare's principles of dramatic composition are fundamentally the same as those of the Greeks. The difference between the two is a historical one. As a result of the increasing objective, social-historical complexity of human relations, the structure of the collision in reality itself became more involved and manifold. The composition of Shakespearean drama is just as faithful and grand a reflection of this new state of reality as the tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles was for the simpler state of things in ancient Athens. This historical change signifies something qualitatively new in Shakespeare as regards dramatic structure. The newness is, naturally, not a simple, external increase of richness in the world portrayed. On the contrary, Shakespeare has invented an entirely new and original system of social and human movements, typical and diverse, but with the diversity reduced to what is typically necessary. It is precisely because the innermost nature of Shakespeare's drama is built upon the same principles as that of the Greeks that his dramatic form was necessarily completely different.

The correctness and depth of Lessing's analysis, however, shows itself more particularly in negative examples. There is a widespread prejudice that an outward concentration of action, a reduction of the number of characters to a few persons, etc. represents a purely dramatic trend, while a colorful and frequent change of scene, a large number of characters, etc. represents an epic trend in drama. This conception is both superficial and mistaken. Whether the character of a drama is truly dramatic or "novelized" depends on how the problem of the "totality of movements" is solved and not on purely formal distinguishing marks.

On the one hand, let us take the manner of composition of the *tragédie classique.* It attempts to realize the famous unity of time and place. The figures who appear are reduced to a minimum. But within this minimum there are

characters who, without exception, are completely superfluous dramatically, namely the notorious "confidants." Alfieri, himself an adherent of this manner of composition, not only criticizes the undramatic role of these figures theoretically, but eliminates them in practice from his dramas. But what is the result? Alfieri's heroes may have no "confidants," but instead they have long and often quite undramatic monologues. Alfieri's criticism exposes a pseudo-dramatic side of the *tragédie classique* and puts a patently undramatic motif in its place. The real error of composition at the basis of this entire problem is that these writers rendered the collision abstract in a mechanical and brutal fashion (this happens in different ways, for different historical and individual reasons, in different representatives of this trend). As a result the living dynamic of the "totality of movement" is lost. Think again of Shakespeare. Even his "most solitary" heroes are not alone. Yet Horatio is no "confidant" of Hamlet, but an independent and necessary driving force of the total action. Without the system of contrasts between Hamlet, Horatio, Fortinbras and Laertes, the concrete collision of this tragedy would be unthinkable. In the same way Mercutio and Benvolio have independent and necessary functions in *Romeo and Juliet.*

Naturalist drama may serve as a counter example. Given a composition which is to some extent dramatic, such as Hauptmann's *Die Weber* (*The Weavers*), the majority of the characters are necessary, representing a live component of the concrete totality of the weavers' uprising. As against this, most naturalist dramas, even those which manage with relatively few characters and heavily concentrate their plots temporally and spatially, always include a number of characters who serve only to illustrate the social milieu for the spectator. Every such character, every such scene "novelizes" the drama, for it expresses an element of that "totality of objects" which is alien in nature to the aim of drama.

This simplification seems to distance drama from life and this apparent distance has given rise to a variety of false theories about drama: in the past, the various theories justifying the *tragédie classique;* in our own time, the theories of the special "convention" of dramatic form, of the theater's "autonomy," etc. The latter are no more than reactions to the necessary failure of naturalism in drama and, landing themselves in the opposite extreme, move inside the same false, magic circle as naturalism itself.

However, one must see this very "distance" of drama as a *fact of life,* as an artistic reflection of how life itself is *objectively at certain moments* and how it *necessarily appears* accordingly.

It is generally accepted that the central theme of drama is the collision of social forces at their most extreme and acute point. And no special perceptiveness is needed to see the relation between social collision in an extreme form, on the one hand, and social transformation, i.e., revolution, on the other. Every genuine and deep theory of the tragic stresses as the characteristic of the collision the necessity, on the one hand, for each of the conflicting forces to take action and, on the other, for the collision to be forcibly settled. If, however, one translates these formal requirements of the tragic collision into the language of life, then one can see in them the most highly generalized features of revolutionary transformations in life itself, reduced to the abstract form of movement.

It is certainly no accident that the great periods of tragedy coincide with the great, world-historical changes in human society. Already Hegel, though in a mystified form, saw in the conflict of Sophocles' *Antigone* the clash of those social forces which in reality led to the destruction of primitive forms of society and to the rise of the Greek polis. Bachofen's analysis of Aeschylus' *Oresteia,* though pressing the mystifying tendencies even further than Hegel, nevertheless formulates this social conflict more concretely, i.e., as a tragic collision between the dying matriarchal order and the new patriarchal social order. The deep and trenchant analysis of this question given by Engels in *The Origin of the Family* stands Bachofen's mystical and idealistic theory materialistically on its feet. It substantiates in a manner, equally clear theoretically and historically, the necessity of the connection between the rise of Greek tragedy and this world-historical transformation in the history of mankind.

The position is similar with regard to the second flowering of tragedy during the Renaissance. This time the world-historical collision between dying feudalism and the birth pangs of the final class society provides the preconditions in subject-matter and form for the resurgence of drama. Marx pointed out this connection quite clearly in regard to the drama of the Renaissance. He also mentions in various writings the social necessity for the rise and close of tragic periods. Thus in the introduction to the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1844) he underlines the element of necessity and the deep sense of justification which arises from this necessity among the dying section of society, as the precondition of tragedy. "As long as the *ancien régime,* as an existing world order, struggled against the world that was only coming into being, there was on its side a world-historical error, not a personal one. That is why its downfall was tragic."

In this youthful essay, as well as later in the *Eighteenth Brumaire,* Marx gives a penetrating analysis of why in the course of history certain social collisions, from being tragic conflicts, become the subjects of comedy. And it is extremely interesting and of fundamental importance for the theory of drama that the objective result of the historical developments investigated by Marx always consists, as it does in this case, in the canceling out, socially and historically, of the tragic necessity of action on the part of one of the conflicting sections, i.e., on the part of the opponent of human progress.

It would, however, be too narrow to restrict the facts of life underlying dramatic form, in a mechanistically rigid fashion, to the great historical revolutions themselves. This would entail an intellectual isolation of revolution from the general and permanent tendencies of social life, it would turn the phenomenon of revolution once more into a Cuvier-like "natural catastrophe." On the other hand, one must above all take note that not all those social collisions which have borne the seeds of revolution have in fact led to revolutions in historical reality. Marx and Lenin pointed out repeatedly that there have been situations which, though objectively revolutionary, have not led to a revolutionary outbreak, because of the insufficient development of the subjective factor. For example, the period at the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s in Germany (the "new era" and the subsequent constitutional conflict in Prussia).

But this by no means exhausts the problem of social collisions. A real popular revolution never breaks out as a result of a single, isolated social contradiction. The objective-historical period preparatory to revolution is filled with a whole number of tragic contradictions in life itself. The maturing of the revolution then shows with increasing clarity the objective connection between these isolatedly occurring contradictions and gathers them into several central and decisive issues affecting the activity of the masses. And, in the same way, certain social contradictions can continue unresolved even after a revolution or, indeed, emerge strengthened and heightened as a result of the revolution.

All this has very important consequences for the question which interests us here. On the one hand, we see the important connection in life between dramatic collision and social transformation. Marx's and Engels's conception of the connection between a great dramatic period and revolution proves itself here completely; for it is clear that the social-historical concentrating of contradictions in life necessarily demands a dramatic embodiment. On the other hand, we see that the trueness-to-life of dramatic form cannot be "localized," as it were, in a narrow and mechanical way, around the great revolutions of human history. It is true that a real dramatic collision gathers together the human and moral features of a great social revolution, but since the portrayal aims at the human essence, the concrete conflict by no means has to reveal immediately a transformation underlying it. The latter forms the general basis of the collision, but the connection between this basis and the concrete form of the collision can be a very complex one, with many intermediary stages. We shall see later on that the historicism of Shakespeare's most mature and outstanding dramas manifests itself in this way. The contradictoriness of social development, the intensification of these contradictions to the point of tragic collision is a *general* fact of life.

Nor does this contradictoriness of life come to an end with the social resolution of class antagonisms through the victorious Socialist revolution. It would be a thoroughly shallow and undialectical conception of life to believe that with Socialism there is only the monotonous serenity of self-satisfaction without problems, struggle or conflict. Dramatic collisions, naturally, take on an entirely new aspect, since with the social disappearance of class antagonism, of antagonistic contradictions, the necessary tragic downfall of the hero in drama, to take one example, no longer plays the same role as before.

But also in regard to the drama of class society, it is worse than superficial to see in this tragic downfall solely the brutal destruction of human life, to see only something "pessimistic," which one then counters with a just as shallowly conceived "optimism" in our own drama. It should never be forgotten that, in the really great dramatists of the past, the tragic downfall has always released the greatest human energies, the supremest human heroism; and this ennoblement of man was only possible because the conflict was fought out to the end. Antigone and Romeo, indeed, perish tragically, but the dying Antigone and the dying Romeo are much bigger, richer and nobler people than they were before being swept into the whirlpool of the tragic collision.

Today it is specially important to stress this side of the tragic collision, to

see how dramatic form generalizes a typical fact of life and makes of it an intense experience. And this human side of the dramatic collision, which is by no means necessarily linked with tragic downfall, is present, too, as a fact of life, in Socialist society and can thus become the basis of a significant dramatic work.

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The Peculiarity of Dramatic Characterization

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We believe we have now given the desired concretization of the dramatic tendencies in life, listed earlier. Without claiming any historical or systematic completeness, which would only be possible in a full dramaturgy, we nevertheless believe that the specific, dramatic embodiment of these facts of life is now clear to us. They are embodied in the fully developed, plastic personality of the "world historical individual," who is portrayed in such a way that he not only finds an immediate and complete expression for his personality in the deed evoked by the collision, but also draws the general social, historical and human inferences of the collision—without losing or weakening in the least either his personality or its immediacy.

The decisive dramatic question here is whether a person can express himself immediately and completely through a deed. Epic, in all its forms, presents the growth of events, the gradual change or gradual revelation of the people taking part in them; its maximum aim is to awaken this convergence of man and deed in the work as a whole, which it portrays, therefore, *at most as a tendency.* In contrast, dramatic form requires immediate and direct proof of this coincidence at every stage of its journey.

To give a concrete historical picture of the facts of life tending toward drama, . . . we should thus have to examine the social-historical conditions of the individual periods and see whether and in what way their economic structure, the nature of their class struggles, etc., favored or did not favor a genuinely dramatic realization of such facts.

If the preconditions are lacking in social life for these dramatic tendencies to launch into real drama, then they will break through in other directions. On the one hand, they will make dramatic form problematic; on the other, they will carry dramatic elements into other literary forms. Both trends are particularly visible in nineteenth-century literature. Goethe and Schiller were the first to establish the reciprocal influence of epic and dramatic form as the essential characteristic of modern literature (cf. my essay on the correspondence between Goethe and Schiller, *Goethe und seine Zeit* [*Goethe and his Age*], Berlin, 1955). Then Balzac, with special reference to Scott as the initiator, stressed the dramatic as a distinguishing mark of the new type of novel in contrast to previous types. This penetration of the dramatic element was extremely fruitful for the modern novel. Not only did it enliven the action, enrich and deepen characterization, beyond that it created an adequate form of literary reflection for the specifically modern manifestations of life in a devel-

oped bourgeois society; namely, for the tragic (and tragi-comic) dramas of life, which though dramatic in themselves, appear in an undramatic way, because they would be unintelligible and unportrayable, except by distortion, without their small, even trivial, capillary movement onwards.

These same social forces, however, could not help exerting a very dangerous influence on drama. For the greater the playwright, the more intimately bound up with the life of his time, the less inclined he will be to do violence to important manifestations of life which are closely connected with his heroes' psychology and the nature of his collisions for the sake of dramatic form. Inevitably, these tendencies added increasingly to the "novelization" of drama. Maxim Gorky, the greatest writer of our time, underlined these factors forcefully in a quite unjustly harsh criticism of many of his own plays: "I have written nearly twenty plays, and they are more or less loosely connected scenes in which the plot is never sustained and the characters are insufficiently developed, vague and unconvincing. A drama must be bound by its action, strictly and throughout; only with this condition can it serve to arouse contemporary emotions."

The trends in the present disfavoring drama are sharply and accurately described here. And to show quite clearly how fundamentally right this criticism is (irrespective of its exaggerated self-criticism), let us recall the decisive scene in one of the best plays of the representative playwright of the second half of the nineteenth century—Henrik Ibsen's *Rosmersholm.* Rebecca West loves Rosmer. She wishes to remove every obstacle between them; thus, she induces his half-mad wife, Beate, to commit suicide. But her life with Rosmer awakens and clarifies her moral instincts; she now feels her deed to be an insuperable obstacle between herself and the man she loves. Now when her change brings her to explain and confess, it happens as follows:

> *Rebecca* (vehemently): You think then that I was cool and calculating and self-possessed at the time! I was not the same woman then that I am now, as I stand here telling it all. Besides, there are two sorts of will in us, I believe! I wanted Beate away, by one means or another; but I never really believed that it would come to pass. As I felt my way forward, at each step I ventured, I seemed to hear something within me cry out: No farther! Not a step farther! And yet I could not stop. I had to venture to the least little bit farther. Only one hair's breadth more. And then one more—and always—one more.—And then it happened.—That is the way such things come about.

Here, with the unflinching honesty of a great writer, Ibsen declares why *Rosmersholm could not become a real drama.* Whatever could be elicited from the material by a judicious artistic intelligence, this Ibsen accomplished. But at the decisive moment we see that the actual drama, namely Rebecca West's struggle, tragic collision and conversion, is, as far as subject-matter, structure, action and psychology are concerned, really a novel, the last chapter of which Ibsen has clothed in the outward form of drama with great mastery over scene and dialogue. Despite this, however, the basis of the play is still, of course, that of a novel, full of the undramatic drama of modern bourgeois life. As

drama, therefore, *Rosmersholm* is problematic and fragmentary; as a picture of the times it is authentic and true-to-life.

As with Hebbel, whom we touched on earlier, so with Ibsen here, what interests us is only their typical and symptomatic sides. The different ways in which novel and drama reflect the dramatic moments of life, and which are to be seen in Ibsen and Hebbel, take us back to a central problem of our study—the ways in which the "world-historical individual" is portrayed in drama and in the novel.

We have already discussed at length why the classics of the historical novel always represented the great figures of history as minor characters. Our present observations show afresh that drama, by its very nature, demands for them the central role. Both types of composition, however much they contrast, spring from the same feeling for genuine historicity, for real historical greatness; both endeavor to grasp in an adequate artistic form what is humanly and historically *significant* in the important figures of our development.

The very sketchy analysis of dramatic form given so far shows how the latter's aim all the time is to bring out immediately and visibly all that is significant in man and his deeds, how the prerequisites for its realization are concentrated in a plastic, self-contained unity of hero and action. But the "world-historical individual" is already marked by such a unifying tendency in reality itself.

Since drama then concentrates the decisive moments of a social-historical crisis in the collision, it must be so composed that what determines the grouping of the figures, from center to periphery, is the degree to which they are caught up in the collision. And since the process of driving the essential moments of such a crisis toward a collision is achieved by vigorously bringing out their human and historical importance, this compositional ordering must at the same time create a dramatic hierarchy. Not in a crude and schematic sense, whereby the central figure of a play necessarily has to be the "greatest person" in every conceivable respect or from some abstract point of view. The hero of drama is superior to his surroundings rather because of his closer connection with the problems of the collision, with the given concrete historical crisis. It is the way in which the latter is chosen and portrayed, the manner in which the hero's passion is linked with this force, which determines whether the formal significance bestowed upon the characters by the representational means of drama is charged with a content that is real and true, historical and human. But for this social content to make itself felt the formal tendencies, which provide the structure of drama, are, as we have seen, indispensable; that is, the singling out of the significant factors from the entire complex of reality, their concentration and the creation out of their connections of an image of life upon a heightened level.

It is quite different in epic. The significant factors here are portrayed as parts, elements of a broader, more extensive, comprehensive totality. We see their complex rise and decline, their inseparable connection with the slow and confused growth of the whole of popular life, the capillary interplay of the great and small, the significant and the insignificant. Earlier we showed how the historically and humanly significant qualities of the "world-historical indi-

viduals" in the classics of the novel grew precisely out of these complex connections. We also showed, in reference to the important observations of Balzac and Otto Ludwig, that a quite special kind of composition is required here, so that neither the significant is submerged in the unfathomable infinity of life, leveled to the average by the often inevitably petty detail of life, nor the authenticity and richness of social reality lost because of artificial stylization, because of an exaggerated heightening of life.

For it is not an essential need of the novel to portray significant people in significant situations. In certain circumstances it can quite dispense with this or it can present the significant persons in a form which gives their features a purely inward-moral expression, so that the peculiar charm of the novel will lie precisely in the contrast between the petty everyday character of life and this purely inward significance of the person, that is, in the disproportion between person and action, between the inner and the outer.

The historical novel does not differ from the novel in general even as regards these possibilities and means; it does not form any genre or sub-genre of its own. Its specific problem, the portrayal of human greatness in past history, has to be solved within the general conditions of the novel. And these—as the practice of the classic authors has proved to us—provide all that is necessary for the successful accomplishment of this task. For the form of the novel by no means excludes the possibility of portraying significant people in significant situations. It can in certain circumstances succeed without these; but it also allows for their portrayal. It is only a question of creating a plot in which these significant situations become necessary, organic parts of a much broader and richer total action; and a plot which is so contrived that its own inner logic impels it toward such situations, because they provide its real fulfillment. And further the "world-historical" figure must be so fashioned that he appears in such and only such situations of his own inner necessity. We are outlining here in different terms and from a different angle what we have already argued before, namely that the "world-historical individual" in the historical novel must be a minor figure.

The diametrically opposed types of composition in drama and the novel thus spring from a similar representational aim with regard to the "world-historical individual": that is, to see his significance and greatness artistically and not to oblige us with domestic platitudes about his "all too human" qualities. But this similar aim is realized by very different artistic means, and, as in all art, the formal difference conceals a very important content. The interesting and difficult task of the historical novel is to represent the significant qualities of the "historical individual" in such a way that it neglects none of the complex, capillary factors of development in the whole society of the time; that, on the contrary, the significant features of the "world-historical individual" not only grow organically out of this development, but at the same time explain it, give it consciousness and raise it to a higher level. What in historical drama is necessarily presupposed, i.e., concrete mission of the hero (the hero himself gives subsequent proof by his behavior during the play that he has this mission and is equal to it), this in the historical novel is unfolded in breadth and evolved gradually, step by step. Balzac, as we have shown, quite rightly

pointed out that, in the classical historical novel, not only is the "world-historical individual" a minor figure, but in most cases he only ever appears when the action is nearing its climax. His appearance is prepared by a broad picture of the times, which allows us to perceive, re-experience and understand this specific character of his significance.

This portrait of the age is held together at the center by the historical novel's "middle-of-the-road" hero. Those very social and human characteristics which banish such figures from drama or permit them only a subordinate, episodic role, qualify them for their central position in the historical novel. The relative lack of contour to their personalities, the absence of passions which would cause them to take up major, decisive, one-sided positions, their contact with each of the contending hostile camps, etc., make them specially suited to express adequately, in their own destinies, the complex ramification of events in a novel. Otto Ludwig was perhaps the first to recognize this difference between drama and the novel which he illustrated very precisely by several examples. "This is the chief difference between the hero of the novel and the dramatic hero. If one were to think of *Lear* as a novel, then Edgar would probably have to be the hero. . . . If, on the other hand, one wanted to turn *Rob Roy* into a drama, then Rob Roy himself would have to be the hero, but the story would have to be considerably changed, Francis Osbaldiston would have to be omitted entirely. Similarly, in *Waverley* Vich Ian Vohr would be the tragic hero and in *The Antiquary* the Countess Glenallen."

The Problem of Public Character. It seems we are once again confronted with a formal problem, a compositional problem, but again what is in fact form here is only an artistically generalized reflection of regularly recurring facts of life. From the standpoint of content the difference we have established so far is explained by the *public character* of drama. Epic of course was also a public art, as far as its historical origins are concerned. This is certainly one of the reasons why the formal divergence between epos and drama in antiquity was slighter than between novel and drama (despite the greater mutual influence of the latter). But this public character of the ancient Greek epos is the same as that of the whole of life in a primitive society. And it was bound to disappear as society developed. If we keep the definition of epic as the "totality of objects" (and the Homeric epics provide the basis and best practical confirmation of this definition), then it is clear that such a world, as a whole, can retain its public character only at a very primitive stage of social development. Think of Engels's observations on the public character, for example, of the household in a primitive society and of how all matters and functions connected with the maintenance of life necessarily take on a private character at an already slightly higher stage of development. And do not forget here the role played by the public character of these phenomena in the Homeric epics.

The dramatic factors in life as such, however, as independent, heightened segments of the life process, are necessarily public in *every* society. Again this division must not be treated pedantically; in particular, it must never lead to a classification of facts of life into public and non-public, dramatic and epic.

Almost every fact of life may, under certain conditions, manifest itself at sufficiently high a level to acquire a public character; it has a side which concerns the public *directly,* which requires a public for its representation. Precisely here we see the transformation of quantity and quality very clearly. Dramatic conflict is not distinguished from other events in life by its social content, but by the manner in which contradictions sharpen and the degree to which they do so. This sharpening then produces a new, original quality.

This unity of unity and diversity is indispensable if drama is to be immediately effective. The dramatic conflict must be experienced by spectators as something immediate, with no need of special explanation, otherwise it can have no effect. Thus it must possess a great deal in common with the normal conflicts of everyday life. At the same time it must represent a new and peculiar quality, so that upon this common basis it can exercise the broad and deep impact of true drama upon the publicly assembled multitude. The examples of the important bourgeois dramas which we cited earlier on, such as *The Judge of Zalamea, Kabale und Liebe* (*Intrigue and Love*), etc., show this transformation at its clearest. They show that what is in itself an everyday incident is forced out before the forum of the public precisely as a result of this sharpening. But this again is a process which occurs with great frequency in life itself. Drama, as the art of public life, therefore presupposes the kind of subject-matter and treatment that will correspond in every respect to this level of generalization and intensification.

The public character of drama has a dual nature. Pushkin pointed this out with the greatest clarity. He says first of the content of drama: "What element is unfolded in tragedy? What is its aim? Man and the people. The destiny of man, the destiny of the people." And in close connection with this definition Pushkin speaks of the public origin and public effect of drama:

> Drama was born in a public square, it formed a popular entertainment. The people, like children, require diversion, action. Drama presents them with an unusual, strange occurrence. The people require strong sensations—even an execution is a spectacle for them. . . .
>
> Tragedy depicted in the main heinous crimes, supernatural sufferings, even physical (e.g., Philoctetes, Oedipus, Lear). But habit blunts the sensations—the imagination grows accustomed to murders and executions, regards them with indifference; whereas in the representation of the passions and outpourings of the human soul it can always find something new, something diverting, great and instructive. Drama came to govern the passions and the human soul.

In connecting these two aspects of the public character of drama, Pushkin goes to the heart of drama in a deep and comprehensive manner. Drama deals with human destinies; indeed there is no other species of literature which concentrates so exclusively upon the destinies of individuals, and in particular upon such as arise from men's antagonistic relations with one another and from these alone. But drama deliberately stresses this exclusiveness. This is why the individual destinies are conceived and represented in such a special way. They give *direct* expression to general destinies, destinies of whole na-

tions, whole classes, indeed whole epochs. The high generalization of the significance and worth of individuals is coupled inseparably with the immediate mass impact. Goethe formulated this connection very precisely: "But to be exact, nothing is theatrical which does not appear simultaneously symbolic, an important action indicating one yet more important."

We have seen how closely this question of the public character of drama's content is connected with the question of form, with the necessarily public nature of performance. The essence of dramatic effect is *immediate,* direct impact upon a *multitude.* (This social pre-requisite of dramatic form crumbles with capitalist development. On the one hand a more or less "purely literary drama" arises which either lacks these necessary characteristics of dramatic form or includes them only very dilutedly. On the other hand, a substanceless, pseudo-theatrical art appears which exploits with formalist cleverness the elements of suspense deriving from the original dramatic principle to provide trifling entertainment for the ruling class. Thus there is in some sense a return here to the initial period of the theater indicated by Pushkin. However, what was then the primitive crudeness which could in time give birth to a Calderon or Shakespeare is now the hollow and refined brutality which amuses a decadent public.) The actual, immediate dependence of dramatic form on immediate mass impact has very deep consequences for its entire structure, for the organization of its whole content, in sharp contrast to the formal requirements of all large epic works which lack this *direct* connection with the multitude, this necessity of immediate impact upon the multitude.

As the conclusion to his long oral and written discussion with Schiller on the common and dividing characteristics of epic and dramatic form, Goethe sums up his views in a short basic essay. Goethe proceeds from a very general concept of the epic and dramatic. Thus he does not give theoretical consideration to the nature of modern epic, to the disappearance of public recitation. But even in the very generalized picture which Goethe gives of the recitation of epic poetry by the rhapsodist, an extremely important difference between the two literary species comes out very clearly. Goethe says: "Their big essential difference lies . . . in the epic poet's recitation of an event as belonging *entirely to the past* and the dramatist's representation of an event as belonging *entirely to the present.*"

It is clear that these two kinds of relationship to a given theme are most closely connected with the public character of recitation. The presentness of something already contains in itself a direct relationship with the hearer. To witness something depicted and conceived as happening in the present, one has to be present in person, whereas to learn about something entirely past neither the physical immediacy of communication nor therefore a public is at all necessary. Thus we see that although Goethe, starting from the classical tradition, still construes epic recitation as public in character, the *accidental* nature of this character—that is, the fact that it is not irrevocably tied to the form of epic—also emerges clearly from his remarks.

Further important differences between epic and dramatic form follow from this antithesis. We shall mention only some of the most important. The immediate effect of drama, the necessity for each phase of action and character

development to be understood and experienced immediately and simultaneously with the events they represent, for there to be no time in which the spectator may ponder, pause or go back over what has happened, etc., creates a greater strictness of form for both author and recipient. Schiller sums up this difference clearly in his reply to Goethe's essay: "The action of drama moves before me, I myself move round the action of epic which seems as it were to stand still." Schiller goes on to stress the greater freedom of the reader of epic in comparison with the spectator of drama.

There goes with this difference the definite and limited range of drama in contrast to the almost limitless extension and variability of epic. Since drama has this framework in which to create the impression of a totality, it follows that all the features appearing in characters and action must be immediately intelligible, clear and effective, while at the same time their meaning must be highly condensed. Drama cannot treat the various elements and motifs, which are objectively linked with one another, in separation, by means of some artistic division of labor. Of course, these elements are objectively linked in epic, too, but the novelist may interpolate scenes and stories, etc., which do not carry the action directly forward, which for example, tell of the past in order to elucidate something in the present or future. In drama proper the action must move forward with each phrase of the dialogue. Even the recounting of a past event must have the function of spurring on the action. Therefore each statement of a proper drama always concentrates within itself a whole series of functions.

Dramatic portrayal makes man much more emphatically the center of things than epic, in particular man as a social-moral being. Drama portrays character and action exclusively through dialogue; it is only concerned artistically with what is viable in terms of dialogue. In epic, on the other hand, an enormous part is played by the physical being of men, by the natural world surrounding them, by the things which form their environment, etc.; man is represented via the inter-action of all these, his social-moral features forming only a part, though a decisively important part, of this whole. Hence the atmosphere in drama is much more spiritual than in epic. This does not mean that characters and relationships are idealistically stylized, but simply that anything which is not a directly social-moral feature of a specific individual can only be present as a precondition or outward cause of a social-moral collision, that both the surrounding natural world of man, as well as his self-made environment may figure only as background or as a means for linking characters, and this only in the barest outlines. (The failure to recognize the inner laws of drama has produced in recent years a whole range of sophisticated, barren productions which have sought to make up for the lack of drama in the theater by using epic substitutes.)

All these factors of dramatic concentration are most evident in the time taken by dramatic events: it must be the same as it would be in reality. While in epic a long stretch of time can be accounted for in a few words, and conversely, the epic writer may be justified in making quite a brief event last for longer than it would in reality. The celebrated demand for "unity of time" has, I believe, its real roots here. Of course, the arguments upon which this demand

was based were mostly wrong and artificial, but many of its opponents, too, missed the real problem. Manzoni fought against the unities of *tragédie classique* in the name of a real historical drama still to be created, but he also contended, quite rightly, simply for the right of the dramatist to insert whatever intervening period he liked *between* scenes represented in their real time.

All these differences between drama and epic appear in a condensed form in the statement of Goethe's, quoted earlier, on the symbolic nature of dramatic characters and the unity of physical immediacy with typical significance in each representational moment of drama. The unity of these two factors is, of course, to be found in epic, too, but there it is much looser. In drama this unity must be constantly realized, whereas in epic it is sufficient if it asserts itself gradually as a tendency in the course of the action as a whole. Here, too, we can perceive clearly the formal consequences of drama's public character.

There are, however, two misconceptions to be disposed of here. We have connected the direct and immediate effect of drama with the problem of public character. But is not this immediacy the essential characteristic of every art? Of course it is. Belinsky quite rightly put the necessity of direct representation and immediate effect at the center of his theory of art. But the immediacy of the public character of drama, which we have stressed, is something special, something characteristic only of drama *within* the *general* immediacy of all literature. These special features of public immediacy in drama emerge even more sharply and emphatically in the course of historical development. With the growing social division of labor and the complication of social relations in class societies, a division between the public and private occurs in life itself. Literature as the reflection of life cannot help reproducing this process. But this does not only affect the themes of literature which deal with the human problems arising out of this development. The forms of literature, too, as generalized forms reflecting constant and recurring features of life, which grow more pronounced with time, cannot remain untouched by this process.

During the process, however, drama and epic take entirely opposite directions. Epic, as the reflection of the extensive totality of life, of the "totality of objects," has to adapt itself to this process. The novel, as the "bourgeois epic," arises precisely as the product of the artistic consistency with which all inferences have been drawn, in terms of form as well, from the changes in life. (The divided artistic character of the so-called "literary epic" is due, among other things, to the retention of certain formal elements of the old epic at a time when the reality corresponding to them was already dead, to the fact that these elements were applied to subjects alien to them and hence used formalistically, because they belonged to specific types of reflection of a past period of human development.)

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The Portrayal of Collision in Epic and Drama. Our comparison of novel and drama shows that the novel's manner of portrayal is *closer* to life, or rather to the normal appearance of life, than that of drama. But, as we have said, the so-called distance of drama is not that of formalist "stylization," but

rather the artistic reflection of particular facts of life. In the same way, the novel's closeness to life differs from the mere copying of empirical reality; naturalism is not the innate style of the novel. The span of the hugest novel is limited. If one were to take the *Comédie Humaine* as a single novel, it would give only an infinitesimal fraction, even in breadth, of the incommensurable reality of its time. An adequate quantitative, artistic reflection of the infinity of life is quite out of the question. The naturalist writers set themselves a Sysiphus-like task, for not only do they lose the totality of an artistically reflected world by producing simply an extract, an inwardly incomplete fragment, but not even the greatest naturalistic accumulation of detail can possibly reproduce adequately the infinity of qualities and relations possessed by one single object of reality. And the novel does not in any case set itself the task of reproducing faithfully a mere extract from life; but, by representing a limited section of reality, however richly portrayed, it aims to evoke the totality of the process of social development.

The formal problems of the novel thus arise out of the fact that any reflection of objective reality is necessarily relative. The novel has the task of evoking directly the full span of life, the complexity and intricacy of its developments, the incommensurability of its detail. Hence the problem of the "totality of objects" as the representational aim of large epic, which we have already raised a number of times, should be understood in a very broad sense; i.e., this whole includes not simply the dead objects through which men's social life manifests itself, but also the various customs, institutions, habits, usages, etc., characteristic of a certain phase of human society and of the direction it is taking. Society is the principal subject of the novel, that is, man's social life in its ceaseless interaction with surrounding nature, which forms the basis of social activity, and with the different social institutions or customs which mediate the relations between individuals in social life. We recall that in drama these various factors may be portrayed only in a very abbreviated and allusive form, only insofar as they provide suitable points of departure for the social-moral actions of men. The proportions in the novel are quite different. The world of the novel is not only a point of departure, but a thoroughly concrete, complex and intricate world inclusive of all the details of human behavior and conduct in society.

It is clear, however, that if this world is to evoke a totality, if a restricted circle of people and a restricted group of "objects" are to be portrayed in such a way that the reader has the immediate impression of an entire society in movement, then some form of artistic concentration is again necessary and any straightforward copying of reality must be resolutely abandoned. Accordingly, the novel, like drama, must give central place throughout to all that is typical in characters, circumstances, scenes, etc. The only difference is that the content and form of what is typical here will be differently constituted in either case. The relation of the uniquely individual to the typical is treated in a slacker, looser and more complex fashion in the novel. While the dramatic character must be directly and immediately typical, without of course losing his individuality, the typical quality of a character in a novel is very often only a tendency which asserts itself gradually, which emerges to the surface only by

degrees out of the whole, out of the complex interaction of human beings, human relations, institutions, things, etc. The novel, like drama, must represent the struggle of different classes, strata, parties and trends. But its representation of them is much less concentrated and economical. In drama everything must serve to support the basic possible attitudes and concentrate upon *one* central collision. Hence dramatically, a single basic trend of human conduct can by its very nature have only one representative; any doubling, as we have seen, would be artistic tautology. (This must not, of course, be understood schematically. When Goethe in his analysis of *Hamlet* points out Shakespeare's subtlety in representing the servile, characterless courtier in the pair Rosenkranz and Guildenstern, he is not contradicting the general law of dramatic stylization. Rosenkranz and Guildenstern always appear together and, from the standpoint of the drama's structure, constitute only *one* figure.)

The novel, on the other hand, gives us not the concentrated essence of some particular trend, but, on the contrary, the way in which the trend arises, dies away, etc. For this reason, the way in which the character of a novel is typical, the manner in which he represents social trends, is much more complex. The novel aims at showing the various facets of a social trend, the different ways in which it asserts itself, etc. What, therefore, would be tautology in drama, is in the novel an indispensable form for crystallizing the really typical.

It follows from this that the relation of the individual to the social group to which he belongs and which he represents is a much more complex one than in drama. This complication of the relation between individual and class, however, is again not a product of the development of literature; on the contrary, the entire development of literary forms, and here in particular the novel, is nothing more than a reflection of social development itself. Marx has given a very precise picture of this changed relationship between individual and class under capitalism. He says:

> [I]n the course of historical development and precisely because social relations within the division of labor are inevitably rendered independent, there emerges a difference in the life of each individual between what is personal and what is subsumed under any particular branch of labor and its relevant conditions . . . In the estate (in the tribe still more) this is as yet hidden, e.g., a nobleman always remains a nobleman, a commoner a commoner, whatever his other circumstances, a quality which is inseparable from his individuality. The difference between the personal individual and the class individual, the accidental character of the individual's conditions of life makes its appearance only with the appearance of the class which is itself a product of the bourgeoisie. Competition and the struggle of individuals amongst themselves first produce and develop this accidental character as such. Hence, in imagination the individuals under the rule of the bourgeoisie are freer than before, because their conditions of life are more accidental for them; in reality, they are naturally more unfree, because much more subsumed under material power.

This is shown most clearly in transitional figures. While the dramatic collision separates the actors into two combatant camps, in the novel it is not only

permissible, but altogether necessary, that the characters should be neutral or indifferent toward the central questions.

It is obvious that this development of the relationships between individual and society is highly unfavorable for dramatic portrayal. On the other hand it forms the very life element of the novel. It is not by accident that the special characteristics of the novel emerged only after these social relations between individual and class had developed. Only the thoroughly crude ahistoricism of vulgar sociology could be totally blind to these connections and subsume the Greek or Persian "novel" under the same genre as the specific modern form of the "bourgeois epic."

However, this close connection between the novel's form and the specific structure of capitalist society on no account means that the novel can simply reflect this reality as it immediately and empirically presents itself. The naturalists for their part have fallen victim to this error. But the classicist champions of the old, traditional forms have understood the artistic problems of the new situation no better, their criterion has simply been a contrary one. Thus, Paul Ernst, for example, the theoretical leader of neo-classicism in Germany, calls the novel "semi-art."

Our previous remarks have been sufficient to show that such a conception of the novel and its relation to the reality it reflects is fundamentally false. In analyzing the so-called distance of drama, we showed it to be a specific kind of artistic reflection of very concrete facts of life. Similarly, we must now mention a few important, general facts of life which constitute the basis of form in the novel. Our argument here has, of course, an opposite aim. There, we had to show that the apparent stylization was a genuine reflection of life, here we must show that the novel depends for its apparent closeness to life just as imperatively as drama upon a recasting of its material, though by different means and to different ends.

Let us begin at the point where the contrast between novel and drama is most obvious, the problem of collision. A collision in a novel does not have to be represented in its highest and sharpest form and then violently resolved. What must be shown rather is the complexity, multiplicity, intricacy and "cunning" (Lenin) of those trends which produce, solve or abate such conflicts in social life. And this brings us to a very important fact of actual life.

If tragic collision is a necessary form of social life, it is so only under very definite conditions and circumstances. It is also a fact of social life that conflicts abate or peter out, achieve no clear and definite resolution, either in the lives of individuals or in society as a whole. This is so in a twofold respect: first, there are definite phases in the growth of society where the mutual blunting of contradictions is the typical form in which social antagonisms are decided; secondly, even in periods when antagonisms are at their sharpest in the lives of individuals, not all conflicts acquire that final edge which leads on to the tragic. Now since the subject of the novel is the total span of social life, a fully carried-through collision can only be a marginal case existing alongside many others. In some circumstances there is no need for it to take place at all, but if it is included, then only as a link within a system of many links. The particular

circumstances, the specific clashes which produce the collision will be shown, but precisely as particular circumstances alongside others, and they certainly will not have to unfold in perfect purity.

If there is a parallel plot in tragedy, it complements and underlines the main collision. Think of the already mentioned parallel between the fates of Lear and Gloster. In the novel it is quite different. Tolstoy, for example, has several plots to parallel the tragic fate of Anna Karenina. The pairs Kitty-Levin, Darya-Oblonsky are only the big central complements to Anna and Vronsky; there are many others, more episodic, parallel plots besides. In both cases the plots complement and illuminate one another, but in quite different directions. In Lear the fate of Gloster underlines the tragic necessity of what happens to the principal hero. In *Anna Karenina* the parallel plots stress that the heroine's fate, while typical and necessary, is yet an extremely individual one. Obviously her fate reveals the inner contradictions of modern bourgeois marriage in the most powerful terms. But what is also shown is first, that these contradictions do not always necessarily take this particular path, thus that they may have an altogether different content and form, and, secondly, that similar kinds of conflict will only lead to Anna's tragic fate in very specific social and individual conditions.

We see here that these complementing parallels and contrasts are much more closely related in drama than in the novel. All that is needed in the novel to justify a complementary plot is a mere affinity with the basic social-human problem, however remote it may seem. In drama, this general resemblance will not do; the problem in the two cases must be visibly related in content, tendency and form.

This difference may be seen perhaps still more clearly by looking at the way contrasting characters are handled in drama and novel. Think of such contrasting groups as Hamlet-Laertes-Fortinbras in Shakespeare or Egmont-Oranien-Alba in Goethe. And compare the relations of these figures, their mutual elucidation with, say, the mutual complementing of the principal characters in Balzac's *Père Goriot.* Balzac himself points out in a theoretical piece that Goriot and Vautrin are complementary parallel figures; the novel itself emphasizes the complementing "pedagogic" influence of the Vicomtesse de Beauséant and Vautrin on Rastignac; at the same time Rastignac, du Marzey, de Trailles form a series of parallels and contrasts which are complemented by Vautrin, Nucingen, Tailleffer, etc., as a group. The important thing about this confrontation is that it is not necessarily a character's chief quality or what is essential to its destiny that gives it this function; the factors which produce such complements or contrasts may themselves be quite accidental, episodic and unimportant; they become appropriate and effective in a particular, all-round context.

This all links up with the specific character of the novel mentioned at the outset, namely that the conflict is not given "in itself," but through its broad objective social connections, as part of some large social development. We can learn a lot here by comparing the composition of *King Lear* and *Père Goriot,* particularly as Balzac's novel was obviously very strongly influenced by Shakespeare. Above all, Goriot's "Lear" fate is itself an episode in the novel, even

though a very important one. Otto Ludwig's remark, which we quoted earlier in a different context, that if *King Lear* were turned into a novel Edgar would be the main hero, is realized here with certain modifications. For Rastignac's destiny also raises the problem of the relation between parents and children, and the naïvely egoistic matter-of-courseness with which Rastignac exploits his family has a certain limited similarity with the behavior of Goriot's daughters to their father. The most important compositional difference, however, is that the family relations here are pushed right into the background. Balzac only alludes to this side of Rastignac; what is important for him is the development which Rastignac himself undergoes as he becomes involved with the most varied people and in the most varied human relationships. And it is interesting to observe how it is precisely the novel's greater breadth, the fact that its principal aim is the broad and gradual development of character (as opposed to the dramatic explosion of qualities already present in a character), that gives a greater concentration and a new emphasis to the typical, in a way which necessarily would have been quite alien to Shakespeare.

Otto Ludwig's remark about Edgar as the hero of a Lear novel is extremely shrewd. However, the genius of what Balzac did in practice gives it greater depth and breadth. For Rastignac is not simply a kind of Edgar, but an inferior variety of the same, who, under the influence of circumstances, *develops* into a weaker, more pliant, less scrupulous, less extreme form of Edgar. Or, rather, he is such, if we see this novel developing *in this direction* as a whole. The novel is as familiar as drama with the unity and contrast of extremes and sometimes brings them to a head in similar ways. But it can also present this unity and contrast quite differently, for example where the interaction of the extremes produces a new development, a new direction, unexpected on the surface. The most significant feature of the really great novels is precisely the portrayal of such directions. It is not a particular condition of society or, at least it is only apparently a condition which is portrayed. The most important thing is to show how the *direction* of a special tendency becomes visible in the small, imperceptible capillary movements of individual life.

There is a tangible and important fact of life to be seen here underlying the form of the novel. Drama has portrayed the great convulsions, the tragic breakdowns of a world. At the end of each of Shakespeare's great tragedies a whole world collapses, and we find ourselves at the dawn of an entirely new epoch. The great novels of world literature, in particular those of the nineteenth century, portray not so much the collapse of a society as its process of disintegration, each one embracing a phase of this process. Not even in the most dramatic of novels is it at all necessary to allude to the social collapse as such. To fulfill the aims of the novel all that is required is to show convincingly and powerfully the irresistible course of social-historical development. The essential aim of the novel is the representation of the way society moves.

For certain classes and in certain conditions this movement may of course be an upward one. But even in such a case, the consistent epic writer will only show the direction of this movement; there is not the slightest need for him to depict ultimate victory or even a decisive triumph. Think of the classical example of Gorky's *Mother,* and compare the irresistible drive of this master-

piece, which portrays the later victory inherently, with the dramatic sense of doom of the old bourgeois world in Gorky's great play *Yegor Bulichov.*

We have now, I believe, said sufficient to show that a limited number of characters and destinies—however numerous compared with the economy of drama—must be very specially selected and grouped if they are to give a clear focus to any such direction. Naturally, these directions are present "in themselves" in the lives of actual people. But the dramatic collision is also present "in itself" in the collisions of life. The artistic adaptation of life, the artistic form of reflecting reality is in both cases a matter of turning this "in itself" into a "for us," though by different means. This is present in the novel's material to as great and as slight an extent as it is in the drama's. The novel, too, must translate social-historical laws directly into characters and destinies which appear uniquely individual. The unity of appearance and essence in art, the complete emergence of essence into pure appearance requires no less a rejection of the immediate and crude empirical world when appearance and essence seem too close to one another, as in the novel's material, than when they are visibly far apart. The difficulties which have to be overcome in the novel are different from those of drama, but no less great.

The difference in the facts of life reflected by each of the genres appears most clearly in the different handling of the action. In his essay on epic and drama, from which we have already quoted, Goethe also dealt with the principles behind this question. He analyzes the different motifs governing action, finding some that are common to both epic and drama and others that form particular characteristics of either of the two genres. These motifs are, according to Goethe: "1. *Progressive ones,* which further the action; such are used primarily by drama. 2. *Retrogressive ones,* which distance the action from its goal; such are used almost exclusively by the epic poem."

To understand Goethe's last statement it should be specially pointed out that he distinguishes exactly between retrogressive and *retarding* motifs. Retarding factors for Goethe are those "which hold up the pace or increase the distance; such are used by both kinds of literature to the greatest advantage." One might think that there is only a quantitative difference between retarding and retrogressive motifs; if the retarding motif is made into the dominant one, it will become *eo ipso* retrogressive. Such an objection is not altogether wrong, but it overlooks what is qualitatively new in this apparently only quantitative development. The question is relatively simple and obvious in drama: the hero storms toward his goal, vehemently combating all obstacles in his path; the action is a ceaseless encounter between progressive and retarding motifs. In large epic, however, the scheme of the action is quite the opposite: precisely the motifs which distance the hero from his goal triumph, and this affects not only the outward circumstances; these motifs become a moving force in the hero himself. Think of the great Homeric epics. What motifs govern the action of the *Iliad*? Chiefly, the anger of Achilles and the events which result therefrom, motifs then which without exception push the goal, which is the subject of the *Iliad,* namely the capture of Troy, further and further into the distance. What governs the action of the *Odyssey*? The anger of Poseidon, who

endeavors to frustrate the epic goal of the poem, namely the homecoming of Odysseus.

Of course, this retrogressive movement by no means succeeds without struggle. There is not only the hero himself, but also a group of fellow actors bent on realizing the epic goal and they struggle ceaselessly against this movement away from it. Were it not for this struggle, the whole of epic would subside into mere circumstantial description. However, this particular kind of action and its predominance are most closely connected with the artistic aim of large epic, with the particular character of the facts of life expressed by these forms.

It is obvious first of all that the "totality of objects" can only spread itself out within a story of this kind. Dramatic action moves rapidly forward, and its halts, brought about by retarding motifs, are simply specific and prominent nodal points on the way to the utmost extreme, the collision. But to portray the whole environment of an action, including nature and society, as stages along this path, as important events and happenings, and to show all this in movement, the action must be based on retrogressive motifs. It is not by chance that as early as the *Odyssey* we have what was to become so important a motif for later epic, namely the journey or wandering and its obstacles. However, it is clear that a simple account of a journey will never produce an epic poem, but merely circumstantial description. It is only because Odysseus's "journey" is a ceaseless struggle with a stronger power that every step along this path acquires an exciting significance: not a single circumstance depicted is mere circumstance, but a real event, the result of an action, the driving cause of a further encounter between the contending forces.

Here then is a form of action which alone is suited to solve the basic stylistic problem of epic, namely to translate into human activity that great series of natural circumstances, human institutions, manners, customs, etc., which taken together form the "totality of objects." Dramatic action storms its way through such "circumstances"; they simply provide the occasions against which man reveals the social-moral moving forces within him. Thus there is no specific creative difficulty for drama here. Since epic, however, must both render this world of "things" and "circumstances" in their most extended fullness and yet all the time translate them into the activity of men, it needs a story which will lead its characters through this entire world in the course of an unending struggle. Only by means of endless battlefields, reasons for fighting, prizes for fighting, etc., is the mechanical circumstantiality of "things" artistically overcome; the extended world of man appears in unceasing, living movement. Referring to Odysseus we mentioned the superiority of his antagonist. This factor is again of decisive importance for the manner of portrayal peculiar to epic. Both drama and large epic, to give a faithful image of human life, must reflect correctly the dialectics of freedom and necessity. Both, therefore, must present man and his actions as bound by the circumstances of his activity, by the social-historical basis of his deeds. At the same time, however, both must portray the role of human initiative, of the individual human deed within the course of social events.

In the dramatic collision individual initiative occupies the foreground. The circumstances which, as the result of a complex necessity, give rise to this initiative are indicated only in their general outlines. It is only in the collision and its consequence that the human deed is shown to be restricted and limited, to be socially and historically determined. In large epic, however, the element of necessity is present and prevalent throughout. The retrogressive motif is only an expression of those general objective forces which are necessarily stronger than the will and resolve of the individual. Thus, whereas drama concentrates the correct dialectics of freedom and necessity in a heroic catastrophe, epic gives a broadly unfolded, entangled picture of the varied struggles—great and small, some successful, some ending in defeat—of its characters, and it is through the totality of these that the necessity of social development is expressed. Both great forms, therefore, reflect the same dialectics of life. They place their emphasis, however, on different sides of the same relationship. This difference is only an expression of those different facts of life which both forms express and of which we have already spoken in detail.

These connections make it clear that the personal initiative of the characters is much more important in drama than in epic. Even in classical drama, where a much stricter necessity prevails, this is the case. Let us take Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex,* a play which has for long served as the model of fatalistic "dramas of destiny." How is it really constructed? Certainly, Oedipus is "called to account" at the end for his past life; certainly, the main theme of the play is the revelation of events long past. But the path which leads to this is determined by the vigorous and tireless initiative of Oedipus himself. True, he is oppressed by the past, but he himself, by his own efforts sets the stone rolling which crushes him. The "novelization" of many modern plays is most strikingly revealed by comparison with this classical model. This is particularly the case with Schiller's plays of the Weimar period. His Maria Stuart, for example, is almost exclusively the object of struggle between opposing historical forces, embodied in minor figures. Her position in the play already betrays strong epic tendencies.

We have seen that in classical epic, too, the driving force of the action is not the epic hero, but the forces of necessity embodied in the gods. The greatness of the epic hero emerged only in his heroic, or tenacious and cunning, resistance to these forces. This character of large epic becomes more marked in the novel. The predominance of the retrogressive motif acquires an even greater significance. For the subject of epic is a struggle of national character and thus, necessarily, has a clear and definite aim. The retrogressive motif dominates the story in the form of an uninterrupted chain of obstacles which resist the realization of this aim.

The new relationship between individual and society, between individual and class, creates a new situation for the modern novel. It is only very conditionally and in special cases that individual action has a direct and social aim. Indeed, as the novel develops, more and more important works arise which neither have nor can have any concrete aim at all. This is true already of *Don Quixote* where the hero's aim is no more than a general one to revive chivalry and seek adventure. But this cannot possibly be called an aim in the same

sense as Odysseus's intention to return home. It is the same with important novels like *Tom Jones, Wilhelm Meister,* etc. In *Wilhelm Meister,* indeed, the peculiarity of the new novel is clearly stated in the conclusion: the hero realizes that he has achieved something quite different from what he set out to achieve on his wanderings. This expresses clearly, in terms of social content, the enhanced function of the retrogressive motif. As the force of social circumstances proves stronger than the intention of the hero and emerges triumphant from the struggle, so the socially necessary asserts itself: the characters act according to their individual inclinations and passions, but the result of their actions is something quite different from what they intended.

Naturally, here again there is no Chinese wall between epic and novel. On the one hand, there are important modern novels which contain a very definite aim; although even when this aim is achieved social necessity triumphs. Thus again the wisdom of *Wilhelm Meister's* final words applies, whereas the national aim of the old epic could be adequately realized, even though great obstacles had to be overcome. Think, say, of Tolstoy's *Resurrection,* where Nekhlyudov wishes to free Maslova; he succeeds, but the achieved aim appears inwardly and outwardly quite different from the imagined one.

These gradations are more important with respect to the historical novel. Since the social reality which it depicts is closer to the world of epic than to that of the modern novel, it is obvious that some of its motifs may bear a strong affinity to the old epic. We have already remarked upon the epic qualities in Scott, Cooper and Gogol. But here, too, there is an important difference. The old epos showed a historical phase of mankind in full flower. For the modern historical novel this period belongs to a distant past, it is a human order which has perished, and is seen in terms of the tragic necessity of its decline. For this reason necessity is a far less straightforward, much more complex thing than in the old epos; here the old order interacts with other, more advanced social formations. General epic aims may remain, but they have already assumed a sectional character within the total picture of society; thus, they have lost their pure epic character.

The second important instance of a connection between epic and novel relates to the art of socialism. Within capitalist society the class struggle of the proletariat gives birth to aims which directly unite the individual and the social. These aims can never, of course, be adequately realized in capitalist society, but epic literature can show their straight and unmistakeable movement toward future fulfillment. Since an analysis of the formal problems which this involves lies outside the scope of this study, let us simply mention Gorky's *Mother.*

In both great forms, then, social-historical necessity must triumph over the will and passions of individuals. But the nature of this struggle and of the victory are entirely different in drama and the novel. Primarily because drama and the novel each reflect a separate side of the life process. We have seen how in the novel necessity manifests itself in an extended, intricate fashion, asserting itself gradually through a series of accidents. In drama, the same necessity is portrayed in the form of the inevitable outcome of a great social collision. For this reason the hero has a definite aim in modern drama, too, or at

least this is so in tendency. The tragic hero storms with fateful determination toward his goal, and the accomplishment, failure or collapse of his aim, etc., will reveal the necessary character of the dramatic collision.

This analysis of the difference between novel and drama again takes us back to our earlier definition. The heroes of drama are "world-historical individuals" (in the correct sense, of course, in which this concept applies to drama, as suggested by Hebbel). The central figure of the novel, on the other hand, belongs of equal necessity to the "maintaining individuals." (This, too, in the broad, dialectical sense in which we have used the term, namely that the self-reproduction of society, its tendencies of gradual development upward or downward, also belong to the concept of "maintenance.") The "world-historical individual" can only figure as a minor character in the novel because of the complexity and intricacy of the whole social-historical process. The proper hero here is life itself; the retrogressive motifs, which express necessary tendencies of development, have as their hidden nucleus the general driving forces of history. The historical greatness of such characters is expressed in their complex interaction, their manifold connection with the diverse private destinies of social life, in whose totality the trends of popular destiny are revealed. In drama these historical forces are represented directly through the protagonists. Since the hero of drama unites in his personality the essential social-moral determinants of the forces which produce the collision, he is necessarily—in the broad sense used above—a "world-historical individual." Drama paints the great historical explosions and eruptions of the historical process. Its hero represents the shining peak of these great crises. The novel portrays more what happens before and after these crises, showing the broad interaction between popular basis and visible peak.

This stressing of different, though equally valid, factors of social life has far-reaching consequences for the relation of both genres to historical reality. Drama concentrates its portrayal of the basic laws of development around the great historical collision. The depiction of the times, of specific historical factors is in drama only a means of giving the collision itself a clear and concrete expression. The historical character of drama thus concentrates around the historical character of the collision itself in its pure form. Whatever will not be absorbed directly and completely by the collision will spoil or even ruin the flow of the drama.

This, of course, does not mean that the collision has a "supra-historical" or abstract "universal-human" character, as was to some extent assumed by the Enlightenment and as many reactionary modern theorists of drama proclaim. Hebbel still saw clearly that even the pure form of the collision, if correctly grasped, is in its deepest essence historical. "The question is," says Hebbel, "what is the relation of drama to history, and to what extent must it be historical? I think, *insofar as it is already this in itself* [my italics, G.L.] and insofar as art may count as the highest form of historical writing, for it is quite unable to represent the most glorious and significant processes of life without at the same time revealing the decisive historical crises, which evoke and condition them, the loosening up or gradual consolidation of the world's religious and political forms as the chief guides and bearers of all culture, in a word: the

atmosphere of the ages." These remarks of Hebbel, though exaggerating certain idealist tendencies of Hegel, go to the heart of the historical character of drama in the right way. Hebbel is also on the right path when in subsequent remarks he rules out of bounds to drama the so-called period details describing individual historical facts, etc. In drama, historical authenticity means the inner historical truth of the collision.

For the novel, on the other hand, the collision is only a part of that total world which it is its task to portray. The novel's aim is to represent a particular social reality at a particular time, with all the color and specific atmosphere of that time. Everything else, both collisions and the "world-historical individuals" who figure in them, are no more than means to this end. Since the novel portrays the "totality of objects," it must penetrate into the small details of everyday life, into the concrete time of the action, it must bring out what is specific to this time through the complex interaction of all these details. Therefore the general historicity of the central collision, which constitutes the historical character of drama, does not suffice for the novel. It must be historically authentic in root and branch.

Let us briefly summarize these conclusions: the novel is more historical than drama. This means that the historical penetration of all the manifestations of life must go much deeper in the novel than in drama. The novel counters the general historicism of the essence of a collision with the concrete historicism of all the details.

It follows from this that the possibility of "necessary anachronism" is much greater in drama than in the novel. In representing the quintessential moments of a historically authentic collision, it may suffice if the historical essence of the collision has been grasped in a deep and genuinely historical manner. Thereby the intellectually heightened speech necessary to drama may further transcend the real horizon of the time, while still preserving the necessary faithfulness to history—that is, if it does not do harm to the essential historical content of the collision, but on the contrary intensifies it.

The limits of "necessary anachronism" in the novel, on the other hand, are much narrower. We have already pointed out that the novel cannot do without this anachronism. But since historical necessity in the novel is not simply general and quintessential but a highly complex and cunning process, this process as such must there take a central place. As a result the scope of "necessary anachronism" is much more restricted than in drama. Of course, the broad portrayal of popular life with all its externals also plays a big part. But the development of the modern novel shows how undecisive a part is played by authenticity of detail. The detail may be of the most conscientious, antiquarian exactness—and the novel as a whole may yet be a crying unhistorical anachronism from beginning to end. This does not mean that authenticity of detail plays no part. On the contrary, it is very important. But it acquires its importance as the sensuous mediator of this specific quality, this peculiar process by which historical necessity asserts itself at a particular time, in a particular place and within certain class relations, etc.

This seems to have landed us with a paradoxical conclusion. We said that the possibility of "necessary anachronism" was much greater in drama, yet at

the same time showed that drama uses authentic historical heroes more frequently than the novel. Our previous remarks surely show clearly enough why the novel must be faithful to history despite its invented hero and imagined plot. The question of the playwright's faithfulness to history, on the other hand, whether he is tied or not tied to the real historical lineaments of his heroes, has dominated all theoretical discussions on history as a subject of literature. As we shall be dealing with this question at length in the next section, we shall not enter into the dialectics of the problem here.

In the meantime let us mention one important factor which will throw light on the formal side of this question. The main distinction we drew between drama and large epic was that drama is by nature something which takes place in the present, while epic, also by nature, presents itself as something already past, a happening which is all over.

This affects historical subjects in the following way: in a novel there need be no paradoxical relationship between the historical character of an event and its manner of representation. Although everything we experience in a historical novel must concern us directly, if it is to have artistic effect, nevertheless we experience it all as our *prehistory.* Whereas in historical drama what "concerns us" has something of a paradox about it. We have to experience a happening of long ago as if it is actually taking place in the present and has direct reference to us. If mere antiquarian interest, mere curiosity can ruin the effect of a historical novel, then the experience of mere prehistory will not evoke the immediate and sweeping impact of drama. Thus, while the essence of a collision must remain historically authentic, historical drama must bring out those features in men and their destinies which will make a spectator, separated from these events by centuries, feel himself a direct participant of them. The *tua res agitur* ("it concerns you") of drama has a meaning qualitatively different from that of the novel. Thus drama draws out those features in all men which in the course of history have been relatively the most permanent, general and regulative. Drama, as Otto Ludwig once said, has an essentially "anthropological" character.

A Sketch of the Development of Historicism in Drama and Dramaturgy

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Let us sum up. The standpoint of historicism which Goethe and Hegel, Pushkin and Belinsky uphold centers upon this: that the writer's historical fidelity consists in the faithful artistic reproduction of the great collisions, the great crises and turning-points of history. To express this *historical* conception in an adequate artistic form the writer may treat individual facts with as much license as he likes, for mere fidelity to the individual facts of history without this connection is utterly valueless. "Truth of passions, verisimilitude of feelings in imagined circumstances—that is what our mind demands of the dramatic writer," says Pushkin.

This distinction between real historical fidelity to the whole and the pseudo-historicism of the mere authenticity of individual facts naturally ap-

plies to the novel as much as to drama. The only difference, as we have repeatedly shown in detail, is that this whole in the novel is the reflection of other facts of life. What matters in the novel is fidelity in the reproduction of the material foundations of the life of a given period, its manners and the feelings and thoughts deriving from these. This means, as we have also seen, that the novel is much more closely bound to the specifically historical, individual moments of a period, than is drama. But this never means being tied to any particular historical facts. On the contrary, the novelist must be at liberty to treat these as he likes, if he is to reproduce the much more complex and ramifying totality with historical faithfulness. From the standpoint of the historical novel, too, it is always a matter of chance whether an actual, historical fact, character or story will lend itself to the particular method by which a great novelist conveys his historical faithfulness.

If we take exact cognizance of these circumstances, we see that the writer's relation to historical reality—be he playwright or novelist—can be no different in principle from his relation to reality as a whole. The practice of all great writers teaches us that it is a matter of chance whether the immediate material which life offers them is suitable or not for revealing adequately the laws of life. Balzac, for example, describes how the model for d'Esgrignons (*Cabinet des Antiques*) was in fact condemned in reality and not rescued, like his hero. Another and similar case of which he knew underwent a much less dramatic development, but for the manners of the provinces it was more characteristic. "Thus out of the beginning of one fact and the end of another there emerged this whole. This mode of procedure is necessary for the historian of manners: his task consists in uniting analogous facts into one single picture; is he not compelled to adhere more to the spirit than to the letter of events?"

Even had Balzac not called himself a historian of manners here—and he does so not figuratively, but in a deeply justified sense—it would be no less obvious that his reflections apply as much to the historical novel as to the novel on a contemporary theme. There is no ground whatsoever for supposing that, because events are past, their inner structure and the necessarily accidental character of individual phenomena are thereby rendered invalid. Nor is the fact that they are to be found handed down in memoirs, chronicles, letters and so on any guarantee that this kind of selection will necessarily preserve the essentials of the particular accidents which give artistic life to an underlying reality.

The deeper and more genuinely historical a writer's knowledge of a period, the more freely will he be able to move about inside his subject and the less tied will he feel to individual historical data. Scott's extraordinary genius lay in the fact that he gave the historical novel just such themes as would allow for this "free movement," and so cleared the way for its development; whereas the earlier traditions of his so-called predecessors had obstructed all such freedom of movement, preventing even a genuine talent from developing. Naturally a special difficulty is involved in the treatment of specifically historical subject-matter. Every really original writer who portrays a new outlook upon a certain field has to contend with the prejudices of his readers. But the image which the public has of any familiar historical figure need not necessarily be a

false one. Indeed, with the growth of a real historical sense and of real historical knowledge it becomes more and more accurate. But even this correct image may in certain circumstances be a hindrance to the writer who wishes to reproduce the spirit of an age faithfully and authentically. It would require a particularly happy accident for all the well-known and attested actions of a familiar historical figure to correspond to the purposes of literature. (For the sake of simplicity we are assuming both that the historical image is an accurate one and that the playwright or novelist who deals with history is really aiming at historical truth.)

In many cases quite insoluble problems occur. We have seen the freedom with which great playwrights of the classical age refashioned well-known historical figures and yet adhered faithfully to history in the large sense. Balzac admires again and again the shrewdness with which Scott avoids such dangers, not only in making the protagonists of history minor figures—this corresponds to the inner laws of the historical novel, but also in choosing wherever possible unknown and unattested episodes from the lives of these figures. This avoidance is not a compromise; for the possibility of radically refashioning a historically very familiar figure is, for reasons we already know, more difficult in the novel than in drama. The fact that the novel is closer to life and necessarily includes more detail leaves less possibility for the kind of generalized raising of a character to the level of the typical that we have observed and traced in drama.

We repeat, a writer's relation to history is not something special and isolated, it is an important component of his relation to the whole of reality and especially society. Surveying all the problems which occur in novel and drama as a result of the writer's relation to historical reality, we see that there is not a single essential problem which is unique to history. This of course does not mean that the writer's relation to history can be mechanically equated with his relation to contemporary society. On the contrary, there is a very complex interaction between his relation to the present and his relation to history. But a closer theoretical and historical examination of this connection would show that the writer's relation to the social problems of the present is decisive in this interaction. This we have been able to observe both in the rise of the historical novel as well as in the peculiar, uneven development of historical drama and its theory.

These observations, however, have a much broader theoretical foundation, namely the whole question of whether the past is knowable. This question always depends upon the extent to which the present is known, the extent to which the contemporary situation can clearly reveal the particular trends which have objectively led to the present; and, subjectively, it depends on how and to what extent the social structure of the present, its level of development, the character of its class struggles, etc., further, inhibit or prevent knowledge of past development. Marx states very clearly the objective connection which exists here: "The anatomy of man is a key to the anatomy of the ape. The indications of something higher in the subordinate animal species, however, can only be understood when what is higher is itself known. Bourgeois econ-

omy provides the key to the classical world, etc. But by no means in the manner of the economists who blur all historical distinctions and see the bourgeois social form in all social forms. One can understand tribute and tithe, etc., when one knows about ground rent; one must not, however, identify them."

Marx comes out very sharply against the modernizing of history in these remarks. In other places he shows how such false notions of the past arise of historical necessity from the social problems of the present. Thus, in refuting false conceptions of the past, he is simultaneously providing fresh historical confirmation of his conception, quoted here, that the knowledge of history is an objective process. These connections are of the utmost importance for us, for we have seen what a high level had to be reached in the epic handling of contemporary social problems, what deep insight was required of writers into the problems of their own day, before a genuinely historical novel could arise.

If one eschews both the petty-philological and the mechanical-sociological attitude toward the development of the historical novel, one sees that its classical form arises out of the great social novel and then, enriched by a conscious historical attitude, flows back into the latter. On the one hand, the development of the social novel first makes possible the historical novel; on the other, the historical novel transforms the social novel into a genuine history of the present, an authentic history of manners, something which the novel of the eighteenth century was already striving for in the works of its most eminent representatives. Thus, we cannot separate the historical novel in the narrower sense from the fortunes of the novel in general, for neither the deepest problems involved in portraying reality nor the historical laws of development of the genre will allow us to do so. (The course of development of historical drama is different, for reasons which we have shown, but it depends no less upon these fundamental issues.) Hence, the question of the historical novel as an independent genre only ever arises if for some reason or other the proper and adequate connection with a correct understanding of the present is lacking, if it is either *not yet* or *no longer* present. Thus, quite contrary to what so many moderns think, the historical novel does not become an independent genre as a result of its special faithfulness to the past. It becomes such when the objective or subjective conditions for historical faithfulness in the large sense are either not yet or no longer present. When this happens a number of highly complicated and highly metaphysical "criteria" are concocted to give this separation a theoretical justification. (The significance of these connections both in theory and practice can, naturally, only be brought fully to light when we deal with the post-1848 novel. Thus, a detailed analysis of these problems will have to wait until the following chapters.)

If one treats the Marxist problem of genre seriously, acknowledging a genre only where one sees a peculiar artistic reflection of peculiar facts of life, there is not a single fundamental problem one can adduce to justify the creation of a specific genre of historical subject-matter either in the novel or in drama. Naturally, a preoccupation with history will always produce its individual and special tasks. But none of these specific problems is or can be of sufficient weight to justify a really independent genre of historical literature.

The Crisis of Bourgeois Realism

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The General Tendencies of Decadence and the Establishment of the Historical Novel as a Special Genre. In the works of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer the historical novel establishes itself as a special genre. This is his decisive significance for literary development. True, Flaubert also stressed the special character of the historical novel and wished to "apply" the methods of the new realism to the historical field which he regarded as a special sphere. But Meyer is the only really important writer of this transitional period who concentrates his entire life's work on the historical novel and evolves a special method for dealing with it. It is clear from previous remarks how large the difference was between this approach to history and that of the old historical novel. Scott gave expression to a new, historical attitude on the part of society which arose from life itself. His historical themes emerged organically, by themselves as it were, from the development, spread and deepening of historical feeling. They simply give expression to this feeling—the feeling that a real understanding for the problems of contemporary society can only grow out of an understanding of the society's prehistory and formative history. Hence Scott's historical novel, as the artistic expression of a historicized attitude to life, of a growing historical understanding for the problems of contemporary society, necessarily led, as we have seen, to a higher form of the contemporary novel in Balzac and again in Tolstoy.

In this period the situation is quite different. We have heard both Flaubert's and Meyer's explanations for their decision to treat historical subjects. We saw that in both cases their motives arose not from an understanding of the connection between history and the present, but on the contrary, from a repudiation of the present, which though understandable and justifiable on human-moral, humanist-aesthetic grounds, in their case is no more than a subjectivist, aesthetic-moral repudiation. The representation of historical subjects is simply a question of costume and decoration, simply a means for expressing their subjectivity more fully than—according to them—a contemporary subject would permit.

We do not wish to dwell here on the self-deception to which the literary spokesmen of this attitude fall victim in regard to their own work; we shall speak about this later. What is important is that this approach to historical subjects expresses on the one hand a general attitude of the whole epoch and on the other *impoverishes* the world portrayed. For what was it that attracted Scott and his important followers to historical subjects? The realization that those problems whose importance they observed in contemporary society took a different and specific form in the past; that history, therefore, as the objective prehistory of the present, is something which is not alien and incomprehensible to the human spirit.

For the modern writers, however, it is precisely the strangeness of history which is attractive. The well-known positivist sociologist and aesthetician Guyau spoke of this relationship very clearly and definitely. He said: "There

are various ways of escaping the *trivial,* of embellishing reality for ourselves without falsifying it; and these ways constitute a kind of idealism which is also available to naturalism. They consist above all in the distancing of things or events, whether in time or in space . . . Art is intended to exercise the transforming, embellishing function of memory." It is very interesting that Guyau makes no difference between the temporal or spatial distancing of the artistic subject. What is essential for him is the embellishing effect of the picturesque, the unfamiliar, the exotic which occurs. Now if one looks, for example, at French literature of this time, one sees a real orgy of exotic themes. Alongside the Orient, Greece, the Middle Ages (Leconte de Lisle's poems), we find decadent Rome (Bouilhet), Carthage, Egypt, Judea (Flaubert), primeval times (Bouilhet), Spain, Russia (Gautier), South America (Leconte de Lisle, Hérédia); in the same period the brothers Goncourt introduce the vogue of the Japanese, etc. In Germany one has the analogy of Meyer's Renaissance, Hebbel's and Richard Wagner's varied, but predominantly exotic, subject-matter and among smaller fry Eber's Egypt and Dahn's tribal migrations, etc.

A literary current of this kind, embracing writers of the most varied trends and importance, has deep roots in the life of the present. Romanticism had made its protest against the ugliness of capitalist life by escaping to the Middle Ages. But this protest still had a fairly clear though reactionary political and social content. The writers protesting now—in the form of exotic subjects—have no such reactionary illusions, or only exceptionally. Their chief experience, particularly in the case of French writers, writing in conditions of more advanced capitalism and sharper class struggle than the Germans, is a universal disgust, an infinite disillusionment with life which has no visible goal. If they long to get away, "away" is more important than "where." The past is no longer the objective prehistory of men's social development, but the innocent and forever lost beauty of childhood, to which a squandered life is passionately but fruitlessly drawn in desperate, unrealizable yearning. This sentiment is expressed most fully in the following stanza from Baudelaire's *Moesta et Errabunda:*

> Emporte-moi, wagon! enlève-moi, frégate:
> Loin! Loin! ici la boue est faite de nos pleurs! . . .
> —Mais le vert paradis des amours enfantines! . . .
> L'innocent paradis, plein de plaisirs furtifs,
> Est-il déjà plus loin que l'Inde et que la Chine?
> Peut-on le rappeler avec des cris plaintifs,
> Et l'animer encor d'une voix argentine,
> L'innocent paradis, plein de plaisirs furtifs?

Distance then, is no longer something historically concrete, not even in the reactionary-utopian sense of the earlier Romantics. Distance is simply negation of the present, difference of life in the abstract, something forever lost, which is impregnated with memory and desire to give it poetic substance. Its poetic sources are thus purely subjective. And the aim of the archaeological exactitude and nervous precision with which the detail of a spatially or temporally remote, exotic world is explored is, as we have seen particularly in Flau-

bert's case, not to investigate the social-historical character of such a world, but to achieve pictorial effect. True the exactitude is supposed to guarantee the objective-artistic reality of the portrayed world but since the inner life of this world depends solely upon the subjective, very modern and very European longing and despair of the writer, the archaeological exactitude can provide no more than stage decorations for the enactment of human destinies which have inwardly nothing in common with the exotic objects so exactly described. And this applies to the most important writers.

But however anti-bourgeois this longing and despair in their immediate content they are profoundly bourgeois at heart. They express the feelings of the best representatives of the bourgeois class at the time, who were yet unable to rise above the onsetting decline of their class. Despite the sharp opposition for instance of Flaubert or Baudelaire to the bourgeoisie of their time, despite the violent repudiation with which their works were received, the socially identical factor which connects them with their class nevertheless predominates. This is why in time their works overcame the indignant repudiation of their contemporaries and they themselves were acknowledged as writers who had given expression to essential themes of their age.

The apparent contradiction here exists only for vulgar sociology. Marx himself defined this relation between writer and class very clearly and precisely:

> Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent.

This relationship between the important representatives of historical (exotic) writing in this period and their class comes out particularly in the way real historical greatness is replaced by cruelty and brutality. We have already dealt with this problem: we pointed out the paradox whereby lofty and sensitive writers, in both an aesthetic and moral respect, like Flaubert and Meyer, were driven to such cruelty and brutality in their writing. We also showed the inevitability of this change, following on the loss of an inner relationship with history, its close connection with the general attitude of the period of decline which no longer saw historical action in terms of the deeds and sufferings of the people themselves, nor "world-historical individuals" as the representatives of popular movements. We need now only mention briefly the relationship between these attitudes and the unconscious experiences of broad bourgeois and petty bourgeois masses for us to realize that while these writers may have towered humanly and intellectually above the mass of their contemporaries, they in fact only gave artistic expression to the latter's hidden, warped and disavowed feelings. Baudelaire again expressed the attitude of the average

bourgeois or petty bourgeois of this period, who equated greatness with brutal excess, in an exceptionally clear and significant form (in *To the Reader*):

Si le viol, le poison, le poignard, l'incendie,
N'ont pas encor brodé de leurs plaisants dessins
Le canevas banal de nos piteux destins,
C'est que notre âme, hélas! n'est pas assez hardie.

In his foreword to *Les Fleurs du Mal* Théophile Gautier gives an extremely interesting and characteristic exposition of this passage. He speaks of the great modern monster of boredom, "which in its bourgeois cowardice dreams insipidly of the savagery and debauchery of the Romans, of the bureaucrat Nero and the shopkeeper Heliogabalus."

Some important modern writers, already more aware of these connections, have actually portrayed the living relationship between ideologies of this kind and the material foundations of bourgeois life. Think of Heinrich Mann's unforgettable Professor Unrat or Heinrich Mann's *Untertan* which bring out the common features of the megalomaniac imperialist bourgeois of the Wilhelmine period and the decorative monumentality of Wagnerian art, where Wagner's Lohengrin appears as the inner ideal of the capitalist Hessling.

This relationship enables us to understand the special position of historical material within the general trend toward the exotic. We have heard the arguments which for Meyer determined the superiority of the historical novel over one with a contemporary subject. Meyer's biographer and critic, F. Baumgarten, has commented very interestingly on Meyer's attitude to historic material, in many respects defining more clearly both Meyer's conception as well as Guyau's general theory of the exotic. Baumgarten says of the writer who deals with the present: "His material is without destiny, it requires the forming hand of the writer to become a destiny. The *historical writer* already has a destiny in his model, one formed by the interaction of character and environment." Baumgarten has no understanding of the historical connections which gave rise to his or Meyer's outlook. In the forces which the historical novel is supposed to portray he sees (in a Rickert-cum-Meinecke form) only ideas, something simply imported by us into the historic material. Because of this subjectivism his contrast between history and the present remains rigid and exclusive. A present-day character cannot be portrayed "because the forms of construction, which only a closed historical process can render visible, cannot be recognized, known and established for the present."

We have quoted this commentary at length because in it incomprehension of the present, the essential unknowability of the present, appears as the basis for treating historical subjects. The past, history, therefore, has no organic connection with the present; in this respect, too, it is rather the latter's rigid opposite pole. The present is obscure, the past reveals clear outlines. That these outlines do not in fact belong to the past as such, but are importations of the subject (or, as the philosophers would have it, "the cognitive subject"), does not affect this opposition in any way, since according to thinkers and writers of this kind any such application of categories of thought to the present is in practice impossible. The prevalent philosophical attitude that the outside

world is unknowable receives a heightened and qualitatively new emphasis when extended to the knowability of the present. The philosophic and artistic idealization of an attitude of helplessness, of a refusal to confront basic problems, of a reduction of the essential to a level with the inessential, etc., deeply affects all problems of portrayal.

The extent and permanence of these subjectivizing trends may be seen most clearly if we look at the remarks of the important anti-Fascist writer and militant humanist, Lion Feuchtwanger, at the Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture. Feuchtwanger in the main—as we shall see in the next chapter—stands quite apart from the purely descriptive writing of the period we have just analyzed, and, in a certain sense, even contrasts with it. Nevertheless, his theoretical arguments in favor of the historical novel betray the influence of the leading reactionary philosophers of the period of decline, particularly Nietzsche, but also Croce, and are full of the same subjectivism with regard to historical subject-matter.

Feuchtwanger compares contemporary and historical subjects from the point of view of their ability to express the writer's ideas. He says:

> If I feel drawn to array a contemporary subject in historical costume, negative and positive causes come into play. Sometimes I am unable to distill certain sections of my plot as I would wish: left in contemporary costume, they remain raw material, report, reflection, idea, they do not form a picture. Or if I use a contemporary *milieu,* I am aware of a missing conclusion. Things are still in flux; whether and to what extent a contemporary development may be assumed complete must always remain arbitrary, every supposed full-stop will be accidental. In portraying contemporary circumstances I am discomforted by a lack of perspective; it is a scent which evaporates because you cannot close the bottle. In addition our very hectic age very rapidly turns all that is present into history, so that if to-day's *milieu* will in any case be historical in five years' time, then why should I not just as well choose a *milieu* which lies as far back as I please, if I want to express a theme which I hope will still be alive in five years' time?

Thus Feuchtwanger repeats many of the arguments which we have met in the writings of the important theorists and writers of this period. It is common to all these theorists that both history and the present are conceived as dead complexes of facts, which have no living movement, no spirit or soul of their own, but which are inspirited from outside, by the writer. On the other hand, the writers' own experiences do not appear to them to be tied down to any time. They believe that the spatial and temporal manifestations of human feelings and ideas are simply a matter of externals and costume, while the feelings and ideas themselves lie outside the historical process and hence may be transferred forward or backward to any age without serious alteration. The choice of historical subjects on the basis of this attitude is, say, in the case of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer purely a question of tasteful artistic selection: those periods of history are chosen in which the decorative embodiment of these feelings can be most adequately adapted to the subjective intentions of the writer.

Dead facts and, in connection with them, subjective arbitrariness in their treatment determine the artistic principles of the historical novel in the period of decline of bourgeois realism. Naturally, all false theories of the historical novel arise upon this basis and find support in the practice of the important writers of this period of decline. The difference from the classical type of historical novel is either, as in the case of Taine and Brandes, a reason for repudiating the latter or this difference is completely blurred over. This is the basis, too, of the vulgar sociological theories of the literary treatment of history, which are founded on history's objective strangeness and incomprehensibility for us and therefore view the artistic treatment of history purely in terms of "introjections" (in the sense of Mach and Avenarius).

In the debate on the historical novel in the Soviet Union in 1934 a number of vulgar sociological conceptions were put forward, the essence of which was to separate history entirely from the present. One trend regarded the historical novel as a "science of rudiments," hence saw in history nothing that might have a living influence upon the present. This conception, which entirely corresponds to the aesthetics of vulgar sociology, namely the conception that classless society has nothing more to do with the literary products of preceding periods, turned the historical novel into an *omnium gatherum* of "rudiments," which may be grouped and "animated" by the writer as he pleases. The other trend drew up two types of historical novel, which together exactly mirror the duality of dead facts and subjective introjection. The first is the historical novel proper in which the idea of a past epoch is immanent. Should this perfect immanence be lacking, then what we get, according to this "theory," is a "contemporary novel" on a historical theme, i.e., pure introjection. In the first case we have once again a history which does not concern us; in the second, we have our own ideas and feelings arrayed in a costume which has nothing in common with the given historical events of the past. Both "theories," therefore, are bastards of bourgeois decadence and vulgar sociology. In these cases we are dealing with theories which arose when revolutionary democracy degenerated into national liberalism and which were then smuggled into Marxism by vulgar sociology as achievements of progress. One need only think of the uncritical glorification with which the literary theories of Taine have been treated by vulgar sociology.

What is most important for us here is this transformation of revolutionary and progressive bourgeois democracy into cowardly, compromising and ever more reactionary liberalism. For we have been able to see, when analyzing writers as important, sincere and outstanding as Flaubert and C. F. Meyer, that the central question of the crisis of realism in the historical novel consists in the same kind of withdrawal, artistically, from popular life and its living forces as took place politically and socially among the bourgeoisie itself in this period. And in the case of honest, democratic writers like Erckmann-Chatrian and also of the much more important de Coster we were able to see how these social and spiritual currents of the age limited and drove to abstraction their plebeian sentiments, in part impoverishing, in part stylizing their literary expression.

The great bourgeois culture of the eighteenth century, whose realism ex-

perienced a last flowering in the first half of the eighteenth century, had its social basis in the fact that the bourgeoisie was objectively still the leader of all progressive forces of society aiming at the destruction and liquidation of feudalism. The pathos of this historic vocation gave the important ideological representatives of the class the courage and *élan* to raise all the problems posed by popular life, to immerse themselves deeply therein and, by grasping the forces and conflicts at work there, to represent the cause of human progress in literature even where this raising and solving of problems contradicted the narrower interests of the bourgeoisie.

With the turn to liberalism this bond is severed. Liberalism is from now on the ideology of the narrow and limited class interests of the bourgeoisie. This narrowing holds true even in cases where the content of what is represented appears to have remained the same. For it is one thing if the great representatives of bourgeois economics championed the rights of capitalist economy as a historical advance over guild restrictions, territorialism, etc., and quite another what the vulgar free traders of Manchester propagated in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The narrowness which this divorce from the people produces is linked with an ever increasing hypocrisy on the part of the political representatives of the bourgeoisie of this period and its ideological hacks in the spheres of economics, philosophy, etc. To all outward appearances the bourgeoisie still figures as the leader of progress, as the representative and pioneer of the entire nation. But since the interests represented are in fact the narrow and egoistic class interests of the bourgeoisie, this kind of "extension" can only be achieved by means of hypocrisy, hushing-up, lies and demagogy. To which must be added that the liberal turn-away from the people is rooted in a fear of the proletariat and of proletarian revolution. Alienation from the people constantly changes into hostility toward the people. And in closest connection with this development liberalism tends increasingly, and in cowardly fashion, to compromise with and capitulate to the surviving forces of feudal absolutism. The ideology of this capitulation finds its expression in the theory of *Realpolitik,* a theory which, to an ever greater extent, not only liquidates ideologically the old glorious revolutionary traditions of the bourgeoisie, but derides them for abstractness, "immaturity" and "childishness" (treatment of 1848 by liberal German historiography).

We have repeatedly pointed out the enormous distance separating important writers like Flaubert or Meyer from the liberal bourgeoisie and its intelligentsia (not to mention the plebeian-democratic writers). Indeed, no writer in this period depicted the baseness, stupidity and corruption of the bourgeois class with more trenchant satire than Flaubert. And in the case of both Flaubert and Meyer their withdrawal into history is a protest against this baseness and triviality, against this stupidity and depravity of the bourgeois class of their time.

But because this opposition is abstract Flaubert and Meyer remain prisoners of their period, with its limitation and narrowing of the social-historical horizon. True, the weapon of satire, the passionate romantic contrast between past and present prevents these writers from becoming apologists of the liberal

bourgeoisie, gives their work significance and interest but it does not help them to escape the curse of alienation from the people. However much they may repudiate or criticize the ideological consequences of this historical situation—and so they do—the social-historical facts themselves, whose ideological consequences they combat, are inevitably reflected in the content and form of their works.

Their artistic problems, themes and method remain determined by this alienation from the people. The fact that in the historical novels of this period, even in the most important, the relations of the individual to public life are either quite apolitically private or confined to the *Realpolitik* of intrigue within the upper stratum of society, is a clear reflection of those basic changes in bourgeois social life, the political expression of which was liberalism. Even Flaubert's most passionate contempt for the liberal bourgeoisie of his time cannot undo his artistic connection with the decline of the bourgeois class.

Thus the new historical novel *as a genre in its own right* is born of the weaknesses of a nascent decline, of the inability of even the most important writers of this period to recognize the real social roots of this development and to combat them genuinely and centrally. We have shown in individual analysis that all the particular artistic weaknesses of this type of historical novel derive from this fundamental weakness. It would be wrong, however, to think that these weaknesses were confined to the historical novel. We have already shown how Flaubert's substitution of atrocities and brutalities for the real summits of social life "prophetically" anticipates the social novel of Zola. In reality, of course, what lies behind this very general literary current, which engulfs even the humanly most refined writers, is a general demoralization and brutalization of human feeling which becomes predominant with the final victory in society of the bourgeoisie. Similarly, transference of social themes to the world "above" is not confined to the historical novel, although it occurs here earlier and more decisively than elsewhere. When Edmond de Goncourt goes over to painting the upper social classes he proclaims this as a higher phase of naturalism. And in the currents superseding naturalism this trend becomes predominant. Naturally, the fact that a historical trend is general does not mean, either in this or any other case, that it is exclusive, and certainly not that it has a uniform effect upon the work of all writers active in this period. Nevertheless, given the deep roots of these literary tendencies in the social body of advanced capitalism and especially of imperialism, the struggle against the social tendencies must go very far before a successful artistic struggle can be waged against their literary manifestations. (That such a struggle is possible is shown by international literature in such figures as Gottfried Keller, Anatole France, Romain Rolland and many others.)

We see therefore that not a single question of the historical novel can be treated in isolation without thoroughly distorting the historical and social continuity of literary development. What right then has one to speak of the historical novel as a genre in its own right? The genre theory of later bourgeois aesthetics which splits up the novel into various "sub-genres"—adventure novel, detective novel, psychological novel, peasant novel, historical novel, etc., and which vulgar sociology has taken over as an "achievement" has noth-

ing to offer scientifically. In the formalist approach to genre all the great traditions of the revolutionary period have completely vanished. This soulless and ossified, this thoroughly bureaucratic classification is meant as a substitute for the living dialectics of history.

Of course each of these ossified categories has a real social content behind it. But in each case the content is that of an increasingly reactionary ideology. And only Menshevist vulgar sociology is so "naïve" as not to notice the social character of this content and to concentrate solely upon the "scientific achievements." We cannot possibly deal in full here with the theory of genre. It suffices to mention one example. When the psychological novel was created a genre in its own right, its important representatives, above all Paul Bourget, clearly stated the tendency which led to the founding of this new genre. For, of course, so intelligent and cultivated a reactionary as Bourget knew quite well that the earlier novelists had been notable psychologists. What he was after, however, was to achieve an idealist and reactionary separation of the psychological from the objective determinants of social life, to establish the psychological as a self-contained and independent sphere of human life. This separation is consolidated by allowing "conservative" instincts supremacy over "destructive." Above all, this psychologism is intended by Bourget to make the flight from the (abstractly presented) contradictions of contemporary life into religion appear convincing. The opportunities for sophistry multiply. It is no longer necessary to present the church and religion through their social determinants, with their political aims, etc., as Balzac and Stendhal did, or even Flaubert and Zola. The question of religion now becomes a "purely inward" question: Rome is no more than a picturesque background (*Cosmopolis*).

The psychological novel is in line with the vulgarization and conceptual freezing of social life by sociology, particularly Taine's. "Status," social position becomes a metaphysical given: it need not be investigated itself; it is unalterable. Only the psychological reactions are to be shown; each case of non-harmonization with the "status" appears as an illness. This is the new interpretation which Bourget gives of *Madame Bovary* and *Le Rouge et le Noir:* "It has not been sufficiently remarked that the essence of *Madame Bovary,* as of Stendhal's *Rouge et le Noir,* is: the study of a spiritual illness produced by a displacement of environment. Emma is a peasant girl who has received the education of a *bourgeoise.* Julien is a peasant lad who has received the education of a *bourgeois.* This vision of a colossal social fact dominates the two books." Thus, as a result of separating off the psychological, all social criticism disappears. Stendhal and Flaubert proclaim the "deep" psychological and social "truth": the cobbler must stick to his last!

We have seen that the social reason for creating the historical novel a genre or sub-genre in its own right is similar: the separation of the present from the past, the abstract opposition of the one to the other. Of course, these intentions cannot really create new genres. In our previous remarks, particularly when comparing historical novel and historical drama, we went to some length to show that every genre was a peculiar reflection of reality, that genres could only arise as reflections of typical and general facts of life that regularly occur and which could not be adequately reflected in the forms hitherto available.

A specific form, a genre must be based upon a specific truth of life. When drama divides off into tragedy and comedy (we shall disregard the intermediary stages), the cause lies in the facts of life which these forms reflect and *dramatically* reflect. For no such separation of genres occurs in epic. Even bourgeois and pseudo-Marxist vulgar sociology have not got round to inventing the sub-genre of the tragic novel. Tragedy and comedy have a different relationship to reality and for this reason a different method of organizing action and characterization, etc. The same applies to the novel and short story. It is not a question of extent. The difference in extent is simply the result of a difference in aim, and there are sometimes border-line cases where a long short story is more extensive than a short novel. It is always the case of a specific form reflecting specific facts of life. The difference of range between novel and short story is only *one* means among many for expressing the different facts of life portrayed by both genres. The real distinguishing mark of the short story is that it does not aim to portray life as a totality. For this reason its form is appropriate to very specific connections of life, e.g., the role of chance.

Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, as a highly conscious artist, clearly felt that the irrationalism of his conception of history required the form of the *Novelle,*[3] and therefore called his works *Novellen* rather than novels. The final Pescara motif, the fact that he is physically incapacitated from acting or deciding because of his fatal illness, is a typical *Novelle* motif. But Meyer nevertheless did want to present a total picture of the problems of the age and so his works broke through the strict and narrow framework of the *Novelle.* On the basis of *Novelle* motifs there arose irrationalist, fragmentary novels.

If then we look at the problem of genre seriously, our question must be: which facts of life underlie the historical novel and how do they differ from those which give rise to the genre of the novel in general? I believe that when the question is put in this way, there can only be one answer—none. An analysis of the work of the important realists will show that there is not a single, fundamental problem of structure, characterization, etc., in their historical novels which is lacking in their other novels, and vice versa. Compare, for example, Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* with his social novels, *War and Peace* with *Anna Karenina,* etc. The ultimate principles are in either case the same. And they flow from a similar aim: the portrayal of a total context of social life, be it present or past, in narrative form. Even special problems of theme, as seem to belong specifically to the historical novel, as, for example, Scott's portrayal of the survivals of gentile society, are not exclusive to it. From the *Oberhof* episode in Immermann's *Münchhausen* right through to the first part of Fadeev's *Udegs* we find problems of this kind repeatedly in novels dealing with the present. One could go through all the problems of content and form in the novel without lighting upon a single question of importance which applied to the historical novel alone. The classical historical novel arose out of the social novel and, having enriched and raised it to a higher level, passed back into it. The higher the level of both historical and social novel in the classical period, the less there are really decisive differences of style between them.

The new historical novel, on the other hand, sprang from the weaknesses of the modern novel and by becoming a "genre in its own right" reproduced

these weaknesses on a greater scale. There is, of course, a fact of life behind this difference of scale, too. But the difference is due not only to an objective fact of life, it is also and especially due to an exaggeration of the general false ideology of the period.

The special character of the historical novel in this period may be stated as follows: the false intentions of the writer are less easily corrected by life in the historical novel than in the novel which deals with the present. In the historical novel the false theories, literary prejudices, etc., of the author cannot be, or are much less easily, corrected by a wealth of living material such as is contained in contemporary themes. What Engels described as the "triumph of realism" in Balzac—the triumph of an honest and complete reflection of the real facts and connections of life over the social, political or individual prejudices of a writer—is much more difficult in the new historical novel than in the contemporary social novel.

We dealt very briefly with two important realist writers of this period, Maupassant and Jacobsen. Maupassant approaches *Bel Ami* in the same way as he does *Une Vie,* Jacobsen *Niels Lyhne* in the same way as *Marie Grubbe.* In *Bel Ami* and *Niels Lyhne,* despite the general "problematic" of the new realism, social reality is richly nuanced. In both cases there occurs a "triumph of realism." Why? Because it was impossible for Maupassant and Jacobsen, as talented and honest observers of life, to pay no attention to the big social problems of their time when portraying a character in the present. It may have been the inner psychological development of the hero or heroine which primarily interested them, but whatever their conscious intentions the social life of the present flowed into their novels from every side, filling them with a rich and articulated life.

This happened much less readily in the historical novel. Feuchtwanger in the remarks we quoted was quite right to say that a subject removed in time can be more easily managed than the material of the present. His only mistake is to see this as an advantage and not a disadvantage. For the post-1848 writer historical material is less resistant, the subjective aim of the writer may be more easily imposed upon it. Hence that abstractness, that subjectivist arbitrariness, that almost dreamlike "timelessness" which we have seen in Maupassant's and Jacobsen's historical novels and which sets them off very much to their disadvantage from the more powerful and more clearly outlined social novels of the two authors.

Even with a writer of Dickens's rank the weaknesses of his petty bourgeois humanism and idealism are more obvious and obtrusive in his historical novel on the French Revolution (*Tale of Two Cities*) than in his social novels. The between-the-classes position of the young Marquis Saint Evremonde—his disgust with the cruel methods used for maintaining feudal exploitation and his solution of this conflict by escape into bourgeois private life—does not receive its due weight in the composition of the story. Dickens, by giving pre-eminence to the purely moral aspects of causes and effects, weakens the connection between the problems of the characters' lives and the events of the French Revolution. The latter becomes a romantic background. The turbulence of the times is used as a pretext for revealing human-moral qualities. But

neither the fate of Manette and his daughter, nor of Darnay-Evremonde, and least of all of Sidney Carton, grows organically out of the age and its social events. Here again any social novel of Dickens, say *Little Dorrit* or *Dombey and Son,* will show how much more closely and organically these relations are portrayed than in *A Tale of Two Cities.*

Yet Dickens's historical novel is still relatively grounded on classical traditions. *Barnaby Rudge,* where the historical events are more episodic, preserves entirely the concrete manner of portrayal of the contemporary novels. But the limitations of Dickens's social criticism, his sometimes abstract-moral attitude toward concrete social-moral phenomena inevitably come out much more strongly here. What otherwise was only an occasional blurring of line becomes here an essential defect in the entire composition. For in the historical novel this tendency of Dickens must necessarily take on the character of modern privateness in regard to history. The historical basis in *Barnaby Rudge* is much more of a background than in *A Tale of Two Cities.* It provides purely accidental circumstances for "purely human" tragedies, and this discrepancy emphasizes what is otherwise only a slight and latent tendency in Dickens to separate the "purely human" and "purely moral" from their social basis and to make them, to a certain degree, autonomous. In Dickens's best novels on the present this tendency is corrected by reality itself, by its impact upon the writer's openness and receptivity. In the historical novel this kind of correction is inevitably weaker. That this is so with as great a writer as Dickens, a classic of the novel who is affected only peripherally by the decline, serves as a particularly vivid illustration of our argument.

The pliancy of historical material, which Feuchtwanger praises, is in fact a trap for the modern writer. For his greatness as a writer will depend upon the conflict between his subjective intentions and the honesty and ability with which he reproduces objective reality. The more, and the more easily, his subjective intentions prevail, the weaker, poorer and thinner will be his work.

Of course historical reality is also objective reality despite the influential modern "cognitive theories" of history. But the writers of the post-1848 period no longer have any immediate social sense of continuity with the prehistory of their own society. Their relationship to history—the social causes of which we already know—is very indirect, relying mainly on the modern and modernizing historians and philosophers of history (e.g., Mommsen's influence on Shaw).

This influence is unavoidable because of the break in social experience between past and present, and is much larger than is normally assumed. Modern writers take from the historiography and historical philosophy of their time not only the facts, but the theory that these facts may be freely and arbitrarily interpreted, the theory that historical development is unknowable and that therefore it is necessary to "introject" one's own subjective problems into the "amorphousness" of history, the theory which proceeds from the anti-democratic hero-cult and posits the lonely "great man" as the focus of history, which sees the mass both as raw material in the hands of "great men" and as a blindly raging, natural force, etc.

Obviously historical facts which have been channeled through such an

organized system of prejudice and preconception can offer the writer no controlling or fruitful resistance. In a few exceptional cases this is achieved by the facts of life themselves. But where history and life are opposed, where the wretchedness of contemporary life is abandoned for the gorgeous splendor of the past, the subjectivism and distortion are only increased. And the consequences are not lessened by the fact that the cause of this flight is, as in Flaubert, an ardent opposition to, and hatred for, the bourgeois present.

Thus the modern historical novel inevitably contains in a heightened form all the weaknesses of the decline in general; it lacks those important qualities of realism which the great writers of the epoch wrested from contemporary life despite the false tendencies of the time. In this sense, but only in this sense, could one speak of the historical novel in the time we are examining as a separate genre. One has simply to compare the descending line of the historical novel with that of the contemporary novel. The severed-from-life, autonomous, reified character of the milieu is not only cruder in the former (this is true already of the Romantic historical novel, particularly marked in the case of Bulwer Lytton), but very soon reaches proportions which the contemporary novel can equal only in its worst representatives. The reason is obvious. Even the driest and most tedious description of milieu is, in some way or another, very deviously, still connected with real life. "Milieu" in the historical novel, however, inevitably degenerates into a deadening preponderance of antiquarianism. This can take quite vulgar forms as in the once so popular novels of Dahn and Ebers. It can also take a refined, precious, nuanced and decorative form, from both a scholarly and stylistic point of view, as in Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean.* The difference, however, is by no means as fundamental as it appears at first sight. The characters are schemas in both. Here they are simply supplied with cleverly formulated ideas and refined emotional attributes; historical reality is no more the living development of a people in a concrete age than it is in Ebers or Dahn, it remains the same lifeless stage, though its colors are more subtly selected and combined. The differences, which are undoubtedly there, only emerge, if one disregards the fact that one is dealing with works of art and looks upon them as essays. Then of course Ebers appears as a vulgar popularizer of a superficial and banal egyptology, while in Pater we have an over-refined, decadent conception of late antiquity.

Notes

1. Throughout this book, "subject" means "artist" or "author," i.e., the individual whose subjectivity creates the work; "object" means the work itself, or, sometimes, an element in the work, such as a character or plot. Trans.

2. *A modern drama fejlödésének története* (History of the Development of Modern Drama), 2 vols., Budapest, 1912. The introductory chapter is available in German under the title *Zur Soziologie des modernen Dramas* in: *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaften und Sozialpolitik* XXXVII (1914), p. 303ff., p. 662ff.

3. The German form of long short story. Trans.

Part Five

Grand Theory II

Are there grounds for seeing José Ortega y Gasset's theory of the novel as a "hispanic equivalent" of Lukács's "teutonic" approach? Certainly many of the same emphases are present here: the definition of the novel over against epic; a deep engagement with the subforms of narrative that complicate this great antithesis; a preoccupation with the relationship between form and content. Yet the argument is made in a philosophical and figurative style that seems very far from the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic of Lukács, and more suggestive (at least in the first reading) of the peculiarly Cervantic dialectic that suffuses what is generally accepted as the first novel, *Don Quixote.*

At the beginning of *Meditations on Quixote,* Ortega appears to side with the later Lukács in giving priority to content as that which indicates the direction or tendency that will be specified or fulfilled by form. This account holds true both for epic and for chivalric romance, "the last great sprouting from the old epic trunk," which in turn is rooted in myth. When he shifts attention to the novel, however, it becomes clear that for Ortega this account of the relation of form to content has particular reference to traditional narrative alone. The transition to modern narrative he concretizes through a discrimination of Cervantes' "exemplary novels" into two basic "series." In the first series "it was the characters themselves and their adventures which were the cause of the aesthetic enjoyment. The writer could reduce his own intervention to the minimum. Here, on the contrary, we are only interested in the way in which the author reflects on his retina the vulgar countenances of which he speaks."

Writ large, this is also the distinction between epic "narration" and novelistic "description." "[D]escription interests us in the novel precisely because we are not actually interested in what is described. We disregard the objects which are placed before us in order to pay attention to the manner in which they are presented." Novelistic form or "how" is prior to novelistic content or "what." In fact, "we do not consider real what actually happens but a certain manner of happening that is familiar to us." This also defines the difference between "bardic" traditional and novelistic modern notions of the real as the essential versus the perceptible.[1] Master Pedro's puppet show exemplifies this difference because its frame "is the dividing line between two continents of the mind." Don Quixote "stands at the intersection where both worlds meet forming a beveled edge," divided between the immanent and essential reality of the story being narrated and its status as a description, a perceptible representation, a realism. Modifying the spatial metaphor, Ortega suggests that

1. With Ortega's "bard" compare Benjamin's "storyteller," above, ch. 6.

"things have two sides": the "sense" of things under the spell of interpretation, and the "materiality" of things as they're seen to be detachable from interpretation. "This is what we call realism: to put things at a certain distance, place them under a light, slant them in such a way that the stress falls upon the side which slopes down toward pure materiality."[2] The fall toward materiality expresses the priority of novelistic form. In realistic poetry "we accompany the myth in its descent, in its fall. This collapse of the poetic is the theme of realistic poetry."

Where the early Lukács psychologizes the "distance" entailed in the thematization of form as a state and product of consciousness, the early Ortega renders distance visually and spatially, as a matter of perspective.[3] In another compelling figure he suggests that "[w]e can experience a similar phenomenon in two directions: one simple and straight, seeing the water which the sun depicts as actual; another ironic, oblique, seeing it as a mirage. . . . The ingenuous manner of experiencing imaginary and significant things is found in the novel of adventure, the tale, the epic; the oblique manner in the realistic novel. The latter needs the mirage to make us see it as such."[4] Elsewhere the distinction between the straight and the oblique is assimilated to the modal difference between the tragic and the comic, the latter of which Ortega associates with mimicry or imitation. If Frye conceives novelistic parody as purely imitative, Ortega seems to treat it as purely critical. And this is surprising, since the oscillation between imitation and critique in which parody consists would seem an apt figuration of the dialectic—between tragic and comic, sense and materiality, straight and oblique, narration and description, epic and novel—that is Ortega's concern. These dyads are comparably dialectical in that in each the latter term takes in both what is "given" and the perspectival partiality of the former term. In the dyad "Helen and Madame Bovary" Ortega suggests how realist distance affects techniques of characterization. "The epic figures are not representatives of types but unique creatures." We apprehend Flaubert's protagonist, on the contrary, in the distance, in the oscillation, between her individuality and her typicality.[5]

Lukács describes this generic dialectic in terms of self-consciousness and double reflection. Ortega relies instead on a material, even biological, figuration to express the change from tacit distinction to explicit separation, a figuration that adumbrates the developmental and gendered theory of the novel in richly suggestive ways. "The ancient world seems a mere body without any inner recesses and secrets. The Renaissance discovers the inner world in all its vast extension." This anatomical discovery is by turns sexual, parturitive, incorporative, and parasitical. Epic "never succeeds in breaking away from its mythical uterus." "The epic will exert its beneficent influence over humanity to the end of time through its child, the literature of the imagination." "[A]lthough the realistic novel was born in opposition to the so-called novel of

2. On realism see below, pt. 10.

3. He also knows the importance of the "psychological" and the "subjective": see "Reality, Leaven of the Myth."

4. Compare Robert's "Foundling" and "Bastard," above, ch. 10.

5. Compare Lukács, *Historical Novel,* pt. 4.

fantasy, it carries adventure enclosed within its body." "So it is not only that *Quixote* was written against the books of chivalry, and as a result bears them within it, but that the novel as a literary genre consists essentially of such an absorption." "Consequently, comedy lives on tragedy as the novel does on epic." Figures like these go far toward complicating our thought about the relevance of generational and gender differentiation to novel theory.

Meditations on Quixote ends with the obscure and proleptic implication that in the contemporary novel, the realist fall toward materiality has come up against the brute impassability of scientific positivism. Published barely a decade later, *Notes on the Novel,* beginning on this same note, seems to inhabit a darker world in which the genre's ambiguous capacity for "absorption" now threatens its quality, even its identity. At the same time, this general state of "decline" would seem to facilitate the occasional achievement of "perfection": "[T]he works of highest rank are likely to be products of the last hour when accumulated experience has utterly refined the artistic sensitivity."

The novel is a victim of its own success. In the process of educating its readers' expectations the novel has all but consumed its finite store of content ("themes," "subjects"). Echoing Lévi-Strauss on the "exhaustion" of the novel, Ortega adduces not form (or "structure") but content as the crucially depleted element. Modern science has played a complex role in this process. "For the first time in history there exists a science of psychology." On the one hand, the sophistication of psychological knowledge renders novelistic characterization naïve and obsolete. But on the other hand, psychology holds the promise of reinvigorating novelistic character—hence content—so long as it isn't allowed to dictate to and dominate the genre by which it's absorbed.

Surprisingly enough, "realism" is the term Ortega now applies to such domination. At times, this seems only to name the positivistic crudity into which the idea of realism has "currently" fallen, so that the term itself can still be applied to the phenomenon of dialectical "distance" analyzed in the *Meditations.* More often, however, the successful novel is characterized (like all art) by its "imperviousness" to "reality": "By virtue of a purely aesthetic necessity the novel must be impervious, it must possess the power of forming a precinct, hermetically closed to all actual reality." "[N]o writer can be called a novelist unless he possesses the gift of forgetting, and thereby making us forget, the reality beyond the walls of his novel." "In order to establish its own inner world it must dislodge and abolish the surrounding one." "For a novel, in contrast to other literary works, must, while it is read, not be conceived as a novel; the reader must not be conscious of curtain and stage-lights." In other words, the "formalism" of the *Meditations* persists in the *Notes;* but whereas in the early Ortega, formal realism establishes contact with the "real" by assuming a distanced perspective on the apparent reality of content, the more recognizably "modernist" formalism of the later Ortega is predicated on an immediacy of representation that, derived from content and ultimately from science, requires for its effect the effacement of that derivation.

If Ortega's change of heart is difficult to explain, it may be because there are too many possible reasons for it. The crisis of the novel seems related not only to the rise of psychology and modernism (on which see below, pt. 12), but

to the postwar "political confusion in Europe" as well. But it may also be that the change itself is an optical illusion, for Ortega's chronological focus in *Notes* is uncertain. Does the later essay expand the two-part periodicity of "traditional epic/modern novel" into a three-part chronology of "epic/novel/modern novel"? Although he insists more than once that his topic in *Notes* is the specifically "modern novel," Ortega elsewhere equates the "modern novel" with the novel as such. Does the modern novel stand in relation to the novel as the novel does to epic? Is the theme of *Notes* the exhaustion (and occasional perfection) of a once flourishing genre, or the discovery that exhaustion has always been the essence of the genre? In *Meditations,* the shift from epic to novel is one from narration to description, from an emphasis on content to an emphasis on form. In *Notes,* this same shift occurs within the history of the novel itself: "[F]rom being pure narration which but alludes, the novel has advanced to strict presentation." More confusing still (but in keeping with our sense of an incipient modernist formalism), the two stages of narrative have exchanged valences, so that it is now precedent "narration" rather than subsequent "description" that entails a perspectival distance: "From being narrative and indirect the novel has become direct and descriptive." Moreover "character," an element of narration and content in *Meditations,*[6] in *Notes* has migrated, through the mediations of psychology, to the "hermetically closed" category of description and form. Hence "[o]ur interest has shifted from the plot to the figures, from actions to persons."

Despite their difficulty, these are fruitful ambiguities because they point to the paradox central to the idea of a "novel tradition." Taking a novelistic, perspectival distance on his own novel theory, Ortega acknowledges that our view of the early novel is relative to "our present-day standpoint," which finds in it a "primitiveness" that answers to and confirms our own modernity.[7] By implication, the early modern reading of epic was preordained by the perspectival distance that's peculiar to the emergent novel and determinant of epic's distance from it. The radical historicism of the novel tradition requires that each of its diachronic stages seeks to recapitulate, within its own synchrony, the novelty that constitutes the entire sequence as a recognizable tradition. As a result, although it's grounded in the two-stage periodicity of "tradition versus modernity," the theory of the novel consistently tends to elaborate the notion of a third period whose necessity is justified by the way the most novel instances of the novel appear to outstrip what has come before (sometimes by recourse to pre-novelistic models),[8] both through the "exhaustion" of the genre and through its very "perfection."

This insight may help us understand the puzzling reprocessing of "character" that transpires from the early to the later Ortega. From the perspective of the early novel, novelistic character is, like plot (or "adventure"), an element of content that crucially differs from that of epic in the distance we achieve on it by virtue of formal realism. From the requisitely innovative perspective of

6. See *Meditations,* "Exemplary Novels," "Books of Chivalry."

7. See "No Definitions."

8. See below, pts. 12, 13, and 14 on the idea of the "neotraditional."

the modernist novel, however, the early novel looks very much like epic. This is a matter not of normative "progress" but of relative perspective. Realism's formal aspect, obscured by use and familiarity and flattened to the status of one-dimensional content, seems to proclaim not the dynamic differential between "sense" and "materiality" but their positivistic and implausible correspondence. Novelistic character, likewise leveled into mere content, is nonetheless susceptible to formal revaluation in that the perspectival distance of realism can be recreated not on it, but within it. This is the meaning of Ortega's paradoxical remark that "[p]recisely because it is a preeminently realistic genre [the novel] is incompatible with outer reality." The dialectical oscillation between outer and inner, "real" and "ideal," is rejuvenated through a process of internalization whereby the "inner evidence" of psychology enables that realist perspectivism whose preexistence modernism is obliged, by the logic of the novel tradition, to forget.[9] In this way, we might speculate, the modernist novel continues and extends the novel genre's encapsulation of formal dissonance—of form-as-content—by matching it with language (in Guillén's terms, with linguistic "matter") that locates dissonance as an internal property of character.

9. Compare the second stage in Lukács's chronological typology in *Theory,* the "romanticism of disillusionment," in which soul predominates over world. In Lukács's analysis, this advanced stage of novelistic internality and interiority is prefigured in the origins of the genre.

12

José Ortega y Gasset

From Meditations on Quixote

First Meditation: A Short Treatise on the Novel

Let us consider briefly the aspect of *Quixote* which seems most external. It is said to be a novel; it is also said, and perhaps rightly, that it is the first novel in point of time and in merit. Much of the satisfaction that the contemporary reader finds in it comes from what it has in common with the kind of literature favored in our times. As we peruse its old pages, we find in them a modern note which is bound to draw the venerable book closer to our hearts: we feel it to be at least as close to our innermost sensibility as are the builders of the contemporary novel—Balzac, Dickens, Flaubert, or Dostoievski.

But what is a novel? Perhaps it is not the fashion to discuss the essence of literary genres. The subject is considered to be a rhetorical one. There are those who even deny the existence of literary genres. Nevertheless, those of us who flee from fashions and resolve to live among the hurrying throng with the calm of a pharaoh may ask ourselves: what is a novel?

1: Literary Genres. The old poetics understood by literary genres certain rules of craftsmanship which the poet was to follow, empty patterns, formal structures, within which the muse, like a docile bee, deposited its honey. I am not speaking of literary genres in this sense. The form and content are inseparable and the poetic content flows on freely without the constriction of abstract rules. Nevertheless, one must distinguish between content and form: they are not the same thing. Flaubert used to say that the form comes out of the content as heat does from fire. The metaphor is accurate, but it would be still more accurate to say that the form is the organ and the content the function which creates it. Literary genres are, then, the poetic functions, the directions, in which aesthetic creation moves.

The modern tendency to deny the difference between the content or theme and its form or expressive apparatus seems to me as trivial as its Scholastic differentiation. Really, the difference is the same as that which exists between a direction and a road. To take a direction is not the same thing as to have gone all the way to our destination. The stone which is thrown carries within it already the curve of its flight. This curve becomes, so to speak, the explanation, development and fulfillment of the original impulse. Thus tragedy is the expansion of a certain fundamental poetic theme and of nothing else; it is the expansion of the tragic element. The form therefore contains the

same thing that was in the content, but it presents in a clear, articulated, developed way what in the content was only a tendency or mere intention. Hence the inseparability of content and form as the two distinct moments in the creation of the same thing.

Contrary to the old poetics I understand, then, by literary genres, certain basic themes, mutually exclusive, true aesthetic categories. The epic, for example, is not the name of a poetic form but of a basic poetic content which reaches fulfillment in the process of its expansion or manifestation. Lyric poetry is not a conventional idiom into which may be translated what has already been said in a dramatic or novelistic idiom, but at one and the same time a certain thing to be said and the only way to say it fully.

In one way or another man is always the essential theme of art, and the genres understood as mutually exclusive aesthetic themes, equally essential and final, are wide vistas seen from the main sides of human nature. Each epoch brings with it a basic interpretation of man. Or rather, the epoch does not bring the interpretation with it but actually *is* such an interpretation. For this reason, each epoch prefers a particular genre.

2: Exemplary Novels. During the second half of the nineteenth century the people of Europe enjoyed reading novels. There is no doubt that when the passage of time has sifted out the innumerable facts which made up that period, the triumph of the novel will remain as an outstanding and representative phenomenon. Nevertheless, is it clear what the word *novel* means? Cervantes called certain of his less important productions *exemplary novels,* but is the meaning of this title so simple?

The use of *exemplary* is not so strange: that tinge of morality which even the most profane of Spanish authors gives to his stories, belongs to the heroic hypocrisy practiced by the best men of the seventeenth century. This century, when the great spiritual seed of the Renaissance yields its golden harvest, does not find any difficulty in accepting the Counter-Reformation and turns to the Jesuit colleges. It is the century when Galileo, after inaugurating the new physics, does not object to contradicting himself when the Church of Rome sets its harsh dogmatic hand upon him. It is the century when Descartes, having scarcely discovered the principle of his method, which is going to turn theology into *ancilla philosophiae* rushes to Loreto to thank Our Lady for his fortunate discovery. But this century of Catholic triumphs is not so unpropitious a time as to prevent the great rationalistic systems from making their first appearance as formidable fortresses against faith. Let this be borne in mind by those who, with enviable simplicity, lay all the blame on the Inquisition for the poverty of thought in Spain.

But let us get back to the title of "novels" which Cervantes gives to his collection. I find here two very different types of composition, although I do not deny that something of the spirit of each may be found in the other. The important thing is that a radically different artistic intention prevails in each series, that poetic creation moves toward a different point in each. How is it possible to include in one and the same genre, on the one hand *The Liberal*

Lover, The Spanish-English Lady, The Force of Blood, The Two Damsels, and on the other *Rinconete and Cortadillo* and *The Jealous Estremaduran*? Let us indicate the difference in a few words: in the first series we are told stories of love and fortune. They are about children, who, torn from the family tree, are subjected to unexpected adventures; about young men who, swept along by an erotic whirlwind, flash dizzily across the horizon like shooting stars; about worn-out, wandering young ladies who sigh deeply in the rooms of inns and speak of their maltreated virginity in Ciceronian style. Sometimes, in one such inn, three or four of these red-hot threads, spun by chance and passion, entangle various pairs of hearts together. To the great amazement of the people at the inn, the most extraordinary recognitions and coincidences then follow. All that is related to us in these novels is improbable, and the interest which it awakens in us springs from its very unlikeliness. The *Persiles,* which is like a long exemplary novel of this kind, reassures us that Cervantes deliberately sought such improbability. The fact that he should close his cycle of creation with this book cautions us not to simplify things too much.

The stories told by Cervantes in some of his novels are the same venerable stories invented by the Aryan imagination many, many centuries ago; so many centuries ago that we can find them already suggested in the original myths of Greece and the Near East. Should one apply the name *novel* to the literary genre which takes in this first series of Cervantes' novels? There is no objection, but one should specify that this literary genre consists in the narration of improbable, fanciful, unreal events.

Something very different seems to be attempted in the other series, of which *Rinconete and Cortadillo* can be taken as representative. Here scarcely anything happens; our minds are not excited by dynamic outbursts of passion nor do they hurry from one paragraph to the next in order to discover the turn of events. If one takes a step forward it is to rest again and look all around. What is sought is a series of static and detailed views. The characters and their actions are so far from being unusual and unbelievable as to be actually uninteresting. No one can say, for example, that the young rogues Rincón and Cortado, or the "shady dames" Ganancíosa and Cariharta, or the ruffian Repolido, possess any attraction in themselves. As we go on reading, in fact, we realize that it is not they themselves but the presentation of them given us by the author which succeeds in gaining our interest. Moreover, if they were not indifferent characters to us because they are so well-known and commonplace, the work would lead our aesthetic emotion along very different paths. The insignificance, the ordinariness, the verisimilitude of these creatures are essential here.

The contrast with the artistic intention of the previous series could not be greater. There it was the characters themselves and their adventures which were the cause of the aesthetic enjoyment. The writer could reduce his own intervention to the minimum. Here, on the contrary, we are only interested in the way in which the author reflects on his retina the vulgar countenances of which he speaks. Cervantes realized this difference clearly when he wrote in the *Colloquy of the Dogs:*

> There is one thing which I should like to point out to you, and you will see the truth of it when I come to narrate the events of my own life: some stories are charming in themselves, while in the case of others everything depends on the way in which they are told. By this I mean to say that there are some that give us pleasure when told without preamble or verbal ornaments of any sort; and there are others that have to be decked out in words and set off with facial expressions, gestures, and inflections of the voice, in such a way that something is made out of trifles and pale and flabby narratives take on point and give pleasure.

What, then, is a novel?

3: The Epic. One thing at any rate is very clear: what the reader of the past century was looking for under the title of "novel" has nothing to do with what ancient times sought in the epic. To derive the former from the latter is to close the way to our understanding of the changes in the novelistic genre, if by such changes we understand chiefly the literary evolution which came to maturity in the novel of the nineteenth century.

The novel and the epic are precisely poles apart. The theme of the epic is the past as such: it speaks to us about a world which was and which is no longer, of a mythical age whose antiquity is not a past in the same sense as any remote historical time. It is true that local piety kept gradually linking Homeric men and gods to the citizens of the present by means of slender threads, but this net of genealogical traditions does not succeed in bridging the absolute gap which exists between the mythical *yesterday* and the real *today.* No matter how many real yesterdays we interpolate, the sphere inhabited by the Achilleses and the Agamemnons has no relationship with our existence and we cannot reach it, step by step, by retracing the path opened up by the march of time. The epic past is not *our* past. Our past is thinkable as having been the present once, but the epic past eludes identification with any possible present, and when we try to get back to it by means of recollection it gallops away from us like Diomedes' horses, forever at the same distance ahead of us. No, it is not a remembered past, but an ideal past.

If the poet asks *Mneme,* Memory, to tell him about the Achaean sufferings, he does not have recourse to his own subjective memory but to a cosmic memory which he supposes to be latent in the universe. *Mneme* is not the reminiscence of an individual but an elemental power.

This essential remoteness of the legendary protects epic objects from corruption. The same reason that prevents us from bringing them too close to us and from giving them too much youth—the youth of present-day things—preserves their bodies from the effects of old age. The eternal freshness and everlasting mild fragrance of the Homeric poetry are attributable to the inability to become old rather than to a tenacious youthfulness, because old age would not be old if the aging process were to stop. Things become old because each hour as it passes takes them farther from us ad infinitum. The old grows older all the time. Achilles, on the other hand, is not any further from us than from Plato.

4: Poetry of the Past. It is time to abandon the opinions held on Homer by the philology of a hundred years ago. Homer is not ingenuousness nor is he a temperament of the dawn of history. Today everyone knows that the *Iliad,* at least our *Iliad,* has never been understood by ordinary people. That is, it was an archaic work from the beginning. The bard was composing in a conventional language which sounded even to him like something old, sacramental and crude. The customs which he assigned to the characters were also of primeval harshness.

Who would have believed it? Homer, an archaic author; the infancy of poetry just an archaeological fiction! Who would have believed it? It is not merely a question of there being archaism in the epic but that the epic *is* an archaism and nothing else essentially. The theme of the epic is the ideal past, the absolute antiquity, we have said. Now we add that archaism is the literary form of the epic, the instrument of poetry-making.

This seems to me to be of the utmost importance if we are to see clearly the meaning of the novel. After Homer, Greece required many centuries to accept the present as a poetic possibility. Actually she never accepted it wholeheartedly. Only what was ancient was poetic for Greece, or rather what was primary in order of time. It is not what Romanticism called ancient, which resembles too closely the antiques of second-hand dealers, with their morbid appeal and our perverse delight in their ruinlike, worm-eaten, fermented and decrepit qualities. All these dying things have only a reflected beauty, and it is not they but the wave of emotion they arouse in us that is the source of poetry; while for the Greek, beauty was an intimate attribute of essential things. What was accidental and momentary seemed to him to be devoid of it. They had a rationalistic sense of aesthetics[1] which prevented them from separating poetic from metaphysical values. They considered beautiful that which contained in itself the origin and the norm, the cause and the model of phenomena. This closed universe of the epic myth is made up exclusively of essential and exemplary objects which were reality when this world of ours had not yet begun to exist.

Between the epic world and the one which surrounds us there was no communication, either great or small. All this life of ours with its today and its yesterday belongs to a second stage of cosmic life. We are part of a second-rate and decayed reality: the men who surround us are not men in the same sense as Ulysses and Hector, so much so that we are not sure whether Ulysses and Hector are men or gods. The gods were then more on the level of men because the latter were divine. Where does the god end and the man begin for Homer? The problem reveals the decadence of our world. The epic figures correspond to an extinct fauna, the character of which is precisely the lack of distinction between god and man, or at least the contiguity of both species. The transition between the two requires no more steps than the frailty of a goddess or the lust of a god.

In short, for the Greeks, only the earliest things are fully poetic, not because they are old but because they are the oldest, because they contain in themselves the foundations and the causes.[2] The stock of myths which made up at the same time the traditional religion, physics, and history contains all

the poetic material of Greek art in its best period. The poet has to start from it, and move within it, although it may be to alter it, as the tragic poets do. These men cannot conceive that a poetic object could be invented, just as we could not conceive inventing a mechanical law. This marks the limitation of Greek epic and of Greek art in general, since until its time of decadence the latter never succeeds in breaking away from its mythical uterus.

Homer believes that the events happened as his hexameters tell us; his audience believed it too. Moreover, Homer does not claim to tell anything new. What he tells, his audience already knows, and Homer knows that they know it. His work is not really creative and he avoids surprising his listener. It is simply an artistic rather than a poetic labor, a technical virtuosity. The only other work in the history of art in which I find an artistic intention comparable to that of the Greek bard is in the resplendent doors of the Florentine Baptistry. Ghiberti, who carved them, was not very much interested in the objects represented but was driven by a wild delight to represent, to transcribe into bronze, figures of men, animals, trees, rocks, fruit.

So it is with Homer. The gentle flow of the epic stream, the rhythmical calm with which equal attention is paid to the great and to the small, would be absurd if we imagine the poet preoccupied with the invention of his plot. The poetic theme existed beforehand once and for all: it sufficed to make it an actual experience in the hearts of the listeners, to make it fully present. That is why it is not absurd to devote only four lines to the death of a hero and all of two to the closing of a door. Telemachus' nurse

> left the apartment; pulling on the silver ring
> she closed the door after her, and made fast the bolt in the slot.

5: The Bard. The aesthetic commonplaces of our time may cause us to misinterpret the satisfaction which the sweet blind singer of Ionia felt in making the beautiful things of the past visible. It may actually occur to us to call it realism. Terrible, uncomfortable word! What would a Greek do with it if we were to slip it into his consciousness? For us the real is the perceptible, what our eyes and ears pour into us. We have been brought up by a spiteful age which has beaten the universe into a sheet and made of it a surface, a mere appearance. When we look for reality we search for appearances. But the Greek took reality to be the opposite: the real is the essential, the profound and latent; not the external appearance but the living sources of all appearance. Plotinus could never make up his mind to have his portrait made because this was, according to him, to bequeath to the world the shadow of a shadow.

The epic poet, with the baton in his hand, rises in our midst, turning his blind face vaguely towards the brightest light; the sun is for him a father's hand which, in the night, touches a son's cheeks; his body has learned the motion of the heliotrope and tries to receive the broad caress as it passes. His lips quiver a little like the strings of an instrument being tuned up. What is his desire? He would like to put the things that happened clearly before us. He begins to speak. But no, this is not speaking, it is reciting. The words come in a disciplined way and they seem to be disassociated from the trivial existence

which they had in ordinary speech. Like an ascending apparatus, the hexameter holds the words suspended in an imaginary air and keeps their feet off the ground. This is symbolic. This is what the bard wants: to remove us from everyday reality. The phrases are ritualistic, the expressions solemn and slightly hieratic, the syntax archaic. From the present he takes only the flower. An occasional comparison drawn from the unchanging, basic phenomena of the cosmos—the sea, the wind, the wild beasts, the birds—injects into the ancient trunk the sap of actuality strictly necessary for the past, as such, to take possession of us and dislodge the present.

Such is the practice of the bard, such is his role in the construction of an epic work. Unlike the modern poet he is not afflicted by the hankering after originality. He knows that his song is not his alone. The racial spirit, creator of the myth, had accomplished the main task before he was born; it had created the beautiful objects. The poet's role is reduced to the scrupulousness of a craftsman.

6: Helen and Madame Bovary. I do not understand how a Spaniard, a teacher of Greek, could say that it facilitates the comprehension of the *Iliad* to imagine a struggle between the youths from two Castilian towns for the possession of a handsome village girl. I can understand being told about Madame Bovary that we should turn our attention toward the typical woman of the provinces practicing adultery. This would be fitting: the novelist completes his task when he has succeeded in representing for us in concrete form what we already knew in the abstract.[3] As we close the book we say: "Adulterous women in the provinces are actually like this; and these rural assemblies are really rural assemblies." We have satisfied the novelist with that reaction. But reading the *Iliad* it does not occur to us to congratulate Homer, because his Achilles is certainly a good Achilles, a perfect Achilles, and his Helen an unmistakable Helen. The epic figures are not representatives of types but unique creatures. Only one Achilles has existed and only one Helen; only one war on the bank of the Scamander. If we were to think of the careless wife of Menelaus as just an ordinary woman, courted by an enemy of her country, Homer would have failed. Because his mission was very restricted, not free like that of Ghiberti or Flaubert, he has to make us see this Helen and this Achilles, who, luckily, do not resemble the humans we usually meet at the crossroads.

The epic is at first the creation of unique beings, of "heroic" natures: the age-old popular fantasy performs this first operation. Later on, the epic becomes the realization, the full evocation of those beings, and this is the task of the bard.

In this roundabout way we have gained, I believe, some light which makes the meaning of the novel clear to us, for what we find in the novel is the opposite of the epic genre. If the theme of the latter is the past, as such, that of the novel is the present as such. If the epic figures are invented, if they are unique and incomparable natures, which in themselves have poetic value, the characters of the novel are typical and nonpoetic; they are taken, not from the myth, which is already an aesthetic and creative element or atmosphere, but from the street, from the physical world, from the living environment of the

author and the reader. We have cleared up a third point: literary art is not the whole of poetry, but only a secondary poetic activity. Art is the technique, it is the mechanism of realization before which the actual creation or invention of beautiful objects appears as the primary and supreme poetic function. That mechanism may be and must be realistic on certain occasions, but not necessarily and not in all cases. The desire for realism, characteristic of our times, cannot be raised to the rank of a norm. We like the illusion of apparent reality, but other ages have had other preferences. It would be vanity to presume that the human race has always wanted and will always want the same things as we do. No, let us open our hearts wide so that they may catch in them all the human things which are alien to us. Let us prefer to have unruly diversity rather than monotonous conformity on earth.

7: The Myth, Leaven of History. The epic perspective which consists, as we have seen, in looking at the events of the world from certain cardinal myths (the summits as it were) does not die with Greece. It has come down to us. It will never die. It is true that when people ceased to believe in the cosmogonic and historical reality of their narratives, the good days of the Hellenic race came to an end. But even deprived of all religious significance, the epic themes, the mythical seeds not only endure as splendid irreplaceable phantoms, but they gain in liveliness and plastic force. Hoarded in literary memory, or hidden in the subsoil of the collective memory, they constitute a poetic leaven of incalculable energy. Bring the true history of a king, an Antiochus or an Alexander, for example, close to this incandescent material and the real history will begin to burn on all sides: all that was normal and ordinary in it will be utterly reduced to ashes. Then, after the fire there will remain before our astonished eyes, shining like a diamond, the marvelous history of a magical Apollonius,[4] or of a miraculous Alexander. This marvelous history is, of course, not history: it has been called a novel. In this way it has been possible to speak of the Greek novel, but the ambiguity which exists in this word becomes evident now. The Greek novel is only corrupted history, divinely corrupted by the myth, or rather, like the voyage to the country of the Arimaspi, fantastic geography, memories of voyages which the myth has distorted and later put together again freely. To the same genre belongs all literature of the imagination, all that is called story, ballad, legend, and books of chivalry. They always deal with some historical material which the myth has distorted and reabsorbed.

We should not forget that the myth is the representative of a world different from ours. If ours is the real one, the mythical world will appear unreal to us. At any rate, what is possible in one is impossible in the other; the mechanics of our planetary system do not apply in the mythical system. The reabsorption of a terrestrial event by a myth consists, then, in turning it into a physical and historical impossibility. The earthly material remains, but it is subject to laws so different from those existing in our world that it is tantamount to having no laws as far as we are concerned.

The epic will exert its beneficent influence over humanity to the end of time through its child, the literature of the imagination, which will duplicate the universe, bringing us frequent news of a delightful world where, if the

gods of Homer no longer dwell, their legitimate successors rule. The gods stand for a dynasty under which the impossible is possible. The normal does not exist where they reign; all-embracing disorder emanates from their thrones. The constitution they have sworn to obey has one single article: adventure is permitted.

8: Books of Chivalry. When the vision of the world which the myth supplies is deprived of its command over human souls by its hostile sister, science, the epic loses its religious gravity and dashes forth in search of adventures. The *libros de caballerías,* or books of chivalrous adventures, were the last great sprouting from the old epic trunk—at least, the last so far.

The book of chivalry retains the epic characteristics, except the belief in the reality of what is told.[5] The events related in it are considered as old too, with an ideal antiquity. The good old days of King Arthur are like backdrops of a conventional past which hang vaguely, indistinctly over the chronology. Apart from the repartee of some dialogues, the poetic instrument in the book of chivalry is, as in the epic, the narrative. I disagree with the accepted opinion which makes narrative the instrument of the novel. This opinion is the consequence of not having contrasted the two genres confused under the name of novel. The book of imagination narrates, but the novel describes. The narrative is the form in which the past exists for us, and it is possible to narrate only what has happened, that is to say, what no longer exists. One describes, on the other hand, what is present. The epic had, as is known, an ideal preterite—the narrative past—which is known in grammars as the epic or gnomic aorist.

On the other hand, description interests us in the novel precisely because we are not actually interested in what is described. We disregard the objects which are placed before us in order to pay attention to the manner in which they are presented. Neither Sancho, nor the priest, nor the barber, nor the Knight of the Green Overcoat, nor Madame Bovary, nor her husband, nor the foolish Homais are interesting. We would not give two cents to see them. But we would give away a kingdom for the satisfaction of seeing them captured within the confines of the two famous books. I do not understand how this has passed unnoticed by those who think about aesthetic questions. What we pitilessly tend to call boring is a whole literary genre, although one that has failed. The boredom consists in the narration of something which does not interest us.[6] The narrative must be justified by its subject matter, and the more superficial it is, the less it comes between the events and ourselves, the better it will be.

The author of the book of chivalry, then, in contrast to the novelist, directs all his poetic energy toward the invention of interesting events. These are the adventures. Today we could read the *Odyssey* as a tale of adventure; the work would doubtless lose nobility and significance, but we would not have misjudged entirely its aesthetic intention. Below Ulysses, the equal of the gods, peeps Sinbad the Sailor and, much more remotely, the homely bourgeois muse of Jules Verne. The connection is based on the fact that events are directed by whim. In the *Odyssey* whim is hallowed by the different humors of the gods; in the books of fiction, of chivalry, it shows its nature more cynically. If in the

old poem the wanderings gain heightened interest because they come from the whim of a god—a theological reason after all—the adventure is interesting in itself because of its inherent capriciousness.

If we examine more closely our ordinary notion of reality, perhaps we should find that we do not consider real what actually happens but a certain manner of happening that is familiar to us. In this vague sense, then, the real is not so much what is seen as foreseen; not so much what we see as what we know. When a series of events takes an unforeseen turn, we say that it seems incredible. That is why our ancestors called the adventure story a fiction. Adventure shatters the oppressive, insistent reality as if it were a piece of glass. It is the unforeseen, the unthought-of, the new. Each adventure is a new birth of the world, a unique process. How can it fail to be interesting?

Soon after we begin living we become aware of the confines of our prison. It takes us thirty years at the most to recognize the limits within which our possibilities will move. We take stock of reality, which is like measuring the length of the chain which binds our feet. Then we say: "Is this life? Nothing more than this? A closed cycle which is repeated, always identical?" This is a dangerous hour for every man.

In this connection I recall an admirable drawing of Gavarni. It is of a sly old man near a stage where the world is shown through a peep-hole. The old man is saying: "Il faut montrer à l'homme des images, la réalité l'embête!" Gavarni was living among some Parisian writers and artists who were defenders of aesthetic realism. The ease with which the public was attracted by the tales of adventure made him indignant. The fact is that weak races may turn this strong drug of the imagination into a vice, an easy escape from the heavy weight of existence.

9: Master Pedro's Puppet Show. As the thread of the adventure develops we experience an increasing emotional tension, as if by accompanying the former in its course we felt ourselves violently pulled away from the line followed by inert reality. At each step this reality pulls, threatening to make the event conform with the natural course of events, and it is necessary for a new impulse from the adventurous power to free it and push it toward greater impossibilities. We are carried along in the adventure as if within a missile, and in the dynamic struggle between it, as it advances on an escaping tangent, and the center of the earth which tries to restrain it, we side with the missile. This partiality of ours increases with each incident and adds to a kind of hallucination, in which we take the adventure for an instant as actual reality.

Cervantes has represented in a marvelous way this psychological reaction of the reader of fables in the experience undergone by the spirit of Don Quixote in the presence of Master Pedro's puppet show. The horse of Don Gaiferos in his headlong gallop leaves a vacuum behind him, into which a current of hallucinating air rushes, sweeping along with it everything that is not firmly fixed on the ground. There the soul of Don Quixote, light as thistledown, snatched up in the illusory vortex, goes whirling like a dry leaf; and in its pursuit everything ingenuous and sorrowing still left in the world will go forevermore.

The frame of the puppet show which Master Pedro goes around presenting is the dividing line between two continents of the mind. Within, the puppet show encloses a fantastic world, articulated by the genius of the impossible. It is the world of adventure, of imagination, of myth. Without there is a room in which several unsophisticated men are gathered, men like those we see every day, concerned with the daily struggle to live. In their midst is a fool, a knight from the neighborhood, who, one morning, abandoned his town impelled by a small anatomical anomaly of the brain. Nothing prevents us from entering this room: we could breathe in its atmosphere and touch those present on the shoulder, since they are made of the same stuff and condition as ourselves. However, this room is, in its turn, included in a book, that is to say, in another puppet show larger than the first. If we should enter the room, we would have stepped inside an ideal object, we would be moving in the hollow interior of an aesthetic body. (Velázquez in *The Maids of Honor* offers us an analogous case: he is painting a picture of the king and queen and at the same time he has placed his studio in the picture. In *The Spinners* he has united forever the legendary action represented by a tapestry to the humble room in which it was manufactured.) Along a conduit of simple-mindedness and dementia emanations come and go from one continent to the other, from the puppet show to the room, from the room to the puppet show. One would say that the important thing is precisely the osmosis and endosmosis between the two.

10: Poetry and Reality. Cervantes declares that he is writing his book against the books of chivalry. Recent criticism has tended to lose sight of this purpose of Cervantes. Perhaps it has been thought that it was a manner of speaking, a conventional presentation of the work, as was the exemplary tinge with which he covers his short novels. Nevertheless, one must return to this point of view. For aesthetic purposes it is essential to see the work of Cervantes as a polemic against books of chivalry. Otherwise, how can one understand the incalculable broadening it brings to literary art? The epic plane on which imaginary objects glide was until now the only one, and poetry could be defined in the same terms as the epic.[7] But now the imaginary plane comes to be a second plane. Art is enriched by one more aspect; it is, so to speak, enlarged by a third dimension; it reaches an aesthetic depth, which like geometric depth, presuppposes a plurality of aspects. Consequently, the poetic can no longer be made to consist of that special attraction of the ideal past or of the interest which its procedure, always new, unique, and surprising, lends to adventure. Now our poetry has to be capable of coping with present reality.

Note the stringency of the problem. So far we had arrived at the poetic by transcending and abandoning the circumstantial, the actual; so that to speak of "actual reality" was equivalent to saying "non-poetic." We have here then the greatest conceivable aesthetic extension of the poetic. How could the inn and Sancho and the muleteer and the blustering Master Pedro be poetic? Of course they are not poetic. In contrast with the puppet show they stand formally for the attack on the poetic. Cervantes sets Sancho against every adventure in order to make it impossible when it happens to Sancho. This is Sancho's mis-

sion. We do not see, then, how the field of poetry can be spread over the real. While the imaginary was poetic in itself, reality is anti-poetic per se. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta:* here is where aesthetics must sharpen its vision. Contrary to what the naïveté of our learned researchers supposes, it is the realistic tendency that is in greater need of justification and explanation; it is the *exemplum crucis* of aesthetics. Actually, it might be unintelligible if the great gestures of Don Quixote did not succeed in guiding us. On which side of the show shall we place Don Quixote? It would be wrong to choose either continent. Don Quixote stands at the intersection where both worlds meet forming a beveled edge. If we are told that Don Quixote belongs entirely to reality we shall not object. We would only remark that with Don Quixote his untamed will would become part of that reality. This will is obsessed with one single goal: adventure. Don Quixote, who is real, actually wants to have adventures. As he himself says: "The sorcerers may take away my good fortune, but not my courage and spirit." Hence the astonishing ease with which he passes from the audience to the puppet show. His is a frontier nature, as the nature of man generally is, according to Plato.

Perhaps we did not suspect a moment ago what is happening now: that reality is coming into poetry to raise adventure to a higher aesthetic power. If this were confirmed we should see reality opening up to make room for the imaginary continent and serve as its support, in the same way as the inn on a moonlit night becomes a ship which sails over the parched Manchegan plains carrying within it Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers, Marsiles of Sansueña and the peerless Mélisande. The fact is that what is related in the books of chivalry has reality in the imagination of Don Quixote, who, in his turn, enjoys an unquestionable existence. So that, although the realistic novel was born in opposition to the so-called novel of fantasy, it carries adventure enclosed within its body.

II: REALITY, LEAVEN OF THE MYTH. The new poetry which Cervantes practices cannot have as simple a contexture as the Greek and the medieval. Cervantes looks at the world from the height of the Renaissance. The Renaissance has tightened things a little more and has completely overcome the old sensibility. With his physics, Galileo lays down the stern laws which govern the universe. A new system has begun; everything is confined within stricter forms. Adventures are impossible in this new order of things. Before long, Leibnitz would declare that simple possibility lacks any validity; that only the "*compossible*" is possible, that is to say, what is closely connected with the natural laws.[8] In this way the possible, which shows its crusty independence in the myth, in the miracle, is inserted into the real as the adventure in Cervantes' portrayal of truth.

Another characteristic of the Renaissance is the predominance acquired by the psychological. The ancient world seems a mere body without any inner recesses and secrets. The Renaissance discovers the inner world in all its vast extension, the *me ipsum,* the consciousness, the subjective. *Quixote* is the flower of this great new turn which culture takes. In it the epic comes to an end forever, along with its aspiration to support a mythical world bordering

on that of material phenomena but different from it. It is true that the reality of the adventure is saved, but such a salvation involves the sharpest irony. The reality of the adventure is reduced to the psychological, perhaps to a biological humor. It is real insofar as it is vapor from a brain, so that its reality is rather that of its opposite, the material.

In summer the sun pours down torrents of fire on La Mancha, and frequently the burning earth produces the effect of a mirage. The water which we see is not real water, but there is something real in it: its source. This bitter source, which produces the water of the mirage, is the desperate dryness of the land. We can experience a similar phenomenon in two directions: one simple and straight, seeing the water which the sun depicts as actual; another ironic, oblique, seeing it as a mirage, that is to say, seeing through the coolness of the water the dryness of the earth in disguise. The ingenuous manner of experiencing imaginary and significant things is found in the novel of adventure, the tale, the epic; the oblique manner in the realistic novel. The latter needs the mirage to make us see it as such. So it is not only that *Quixote* was written against the books of chivalry, and as a result bears them within it, but that the novel as a literary genre consists essentially of such an absorption.

This provides an explanation of what seemed inexplicable: how reality, the actual, can be changed into poetic substance. By itself, seen in a direct way, it would never be poetic: this is the privilege of the mythical. But we can consider it obliquely as destruction of the myth, as criticism of the myth. In this form reality, which is of an inert and meaningless nature, quiet and mute, acquires movement, is changed into an active power of aggression against the crystal orb of the ideal. The enchantment of the latter broken, it falls into fine, iridescent dust which gradually loses its colors until it becomes an earthy brown. We witness this scene in every novel. So, strictly speaking, it is not reality that becomes poetic or enters into the work of art but only that gesture or movement of reality in which the ideal is reabsorbed.

In conclusion, the process we have here is exactly the opposite of the one engendered by the novel of fantasy. Furthermore, the realistic novel describes the process itself, while the novel of fantasy describes only the product, the adventure.

12: The Windmills. The plain of Montiel is now for us a reverberant, limitless area where all kinds of things may be found illustrated. Riding over it with Don Quixote and Sancho, we come to understand that things have two sides. One is the "sense" of things, their meaning, what they are when interpreted. The other is the "materiality" of things, the positive substance that constitutes them before, and independent of, any interpretation.

The flour mills of Criptana rise and gesticulate above the horizon in the bloodshot sunset. These mills have a meaning: their "sense" as giants. It is true that Don Quixote is out of his senses but the problem is not solved by declaring Don Quixote insane. What is abnormal in him has been and will continue to be normal in humanity. Granted that these giants are not giants, but what about the others? I mean, what about giants in general? Where did man get his giants? Because they never existed nor do they exist in reality. Whenever

it may have been, the occasion on which man first thought up giants does not differ essentially from the scene in Cervantes' work. There would always be something which was not a giant, but which tended to become one if regarded from its idealistic side. Thus there is an allusion to Briarean arms in the turning wings of these windmills. If we obey the impulse of that allusion and let ourselves go along the curve indicated by it, we shall arrive at a giant.

Justice and truth, too, like all expressions of the spirit, are mirages produced on matter. Culture—the ideal side of things—tries to set itself up as a separate and self-sufficient world to which we can transfer our hearts. This is an illusion, and only looked upon as an illusion, only considered as a mirage on earth, does culture take its proper place.

13: Realistic Poetry. In the same way as the outlines of rocks and clouds contain allusions to certain animal forms, all things from their inert materiality make signs, as it were, which we interpret. These interpretations coalesce into an objectivity which is like a duplication of the primary, or so-called real, objectivity. An everlasting conflict originates from this: the "idea" or "sense" of each thing and its "materiality" trying to fit into each other. But this implies the victory of one of them. If the "idea" triumphs, the "materiality" is superseded and we live under a hallucination. If the materiality wins out and, penetrating the vapors of the idea, reabsorbs it, we live disillusioned.

It is known that the action of seeing consists in applying a previous image which we have to a present sensation. A dark point in the distance may be seen by us successively as a tower, as a tree, as a man. We find that Plato was right when he explained perception as the result of something which goes from the eye to the object and something which comes from the object to the eye. Leonardo da Vinci used to place his students in front of a wall so that they might get accustomed to noticing a great number of imaginary forms in the shapes of the stones, in their joining lines, in the play of light and shade. Platonic to the core, all that Leonardo was looking for in reality was the Paraclete, the awakener of the spirit.

Now there are distances, lights, and slants from which the sensitive material of things reduces the sphere of our interpretation to a minimum. The force of the concrete in things stops the movement of our images. The inert and harsh object rejects whatever "meanings" we may give it; it is just there, confronting us, affirming its mute, terrible materiality in the face of all phantoms. This is what we call realism: to put things at a certain distance, place them under a light, slant them in such a way that the stress falls upon the side which slopes down toward pure materiality.

The myth is always the starting point of all poetry, including the realistic, except that in the latter we accompany the myth in its descent, in its fall. This collapse of the poetic is the theme of realistic poetry. I do not believe that reality can enter into art in any way other than by making an active and combative element out of its own inertia and desolation. It cannot interest us by itself. Much less can its duplication interest us. As I said above, the characters of the novel lack attraction. How then can their representation move us? And yet, it is so: the real things do not move us but their representation—that is

to say, the representation of their reality—does. This distinction is, in my opinion, decisive: the poetic quality of reality does not lie in the reality of this or that particular thing, but in reality as a generic function. Therefore it does not actually matter what objects the realist chooses to describe. Any one at all will do, since they all have an imaginary halo around them, and the point is to show the pure materiality under it. We see in this materiality its final claim, its critical power before which, providing it is declared sufficient, man's pretension to the ideal, to all that he loves and imagines, yields; the insufficiency, in a word, of culture, of all that is noble, clear, lofty—this is the significance of poetic realism. Cervantes recognizes that culture is all that, but that, alas, it is a fiction. Surrounding culture—as the puppet-show of fancy was surrounded by the inn—lies the barbarous, brutal, mute, meaningless reality of things. It is sad that it should reveal itself to us thus, but what can we do about it! It is real, it is there: it is terribly self-sufficient. Its force and its single meaning are rooted in its sheer presence. Culture is memories and promises, an irreversible past, a dreamed future. But reality is a simple and frightening "being there." It is a presence, a deposit, an inertia. It is materiality.[9]

14: MIME. Cervantes does not, of course, invent *a nihilo* the poetic theme of reality: he simply carries it to a classical expansion. Until it finds in the novel, in *Quixote,* the organic structure which suits it, that theme has been wandering like a trickle of water seeking its outlet, haltingly feeling its way among obstacles, searching for a way around them, infiltrating other bodies. At any rate it has strange beginnings. It originates in the antipodes of the myth and the epic. Strictly speaking, it originates outside of literature.

The germ of realism is found in a certain impulse which forces man to imitate the outstanding characteristic of his fellows or of animals. That characteristic feature of a physiognomy—person, animal, or thing—is so significant that, on being reproduced, it evokes in us the other characteristics, making them present to us quickly and vividly. However, one does not imitate for the sake of imitating: this imitative impulse—like the most complex forms of realism which have been described above—is not original, it is not self-created. It grows out of an extraneous aim. One imitates in order to mock. Here we have the origin for which we are searching: the mime. So that it is only through a comic intention that reality seems to acquire an aesthetic interest. This seems to be a very curious historical confirmation of what I have just said about the novel.

Actually, in Greece, where poetry demands an ideal distance from every object in order to make it aesthetic, we find everyday themes only in comedy. Like Cervantes, Aristophanes makes use of the people he meets in the market place and introduces them into an artistic work, but he does it in order to make fun of them. From comedy, dialogue originates in its turn—a genre which has not been able to achieve independence. Plato's dialogue also both describes the real and makes fun of the real. Whenever it goes beyond the comic it leans upon an extra-poetic interest—the scientific. This is a fact to keep in mind. The real, either as comedy or as science, may pass into poetry, but we never find the poetry of the real as simply real.

Here we have the only points of Greek literature to which we can fasten the thread of novelistic evolution.[10] The novel is born with a comic sting and it will preserve this nature forever. The criticism, the banter, is not an unessential ornament of *Quixote,* but rather the very texture of the genre, perhaps of all realism.

15: The Hero. So far we have not had the opportunity of looking carefully at the essence of the comic. When I was writing that the novel shows us a mirage as such, the word *comedy* kept circling around the tip of my pen like a dog who hears his master's call. For some unknown reason a certain similarity makes us compare the mirage on the burnt-stubble fields with the comedies in the minds of men.

Now our story leads us back to this subject. We had left something hanging in mid-air, wavering between the room in the inn and Master Pedro's puppet show. This something is nothing less than the will of Don Quixote. People may be able to take good fortune away from this neighbor of ours, but they will not be able to take away his effort and courage. His adventures may be the vapors of a fermenting brain, but his will for adventure is real and true. Now, adventure is a dislocation of the material order, something unreal. In this will for adventure, in this effort and courage, we come across a strange dual nature, whose two elements belong to opposite worlds: the will is real but what is willed is not real.

Such a phenomenon is unknown in the epic. The men of Homer belong to the same world as their desires. In Don Quixote we have, on the other hand, a man who wishes to reform reality. But is he not a piece of that reality? Does he not live off it, is he not a consequence of it? How is it possible for that which does not exist—a projected adventure—to govern and alter harsh reality? Perhaps it is not possible, but it is a fact that there are men who decide not to be satisfied with reality. Such men aim at altering the course of things; they refuse to repeat the gestures that custom, tradition, or biological instincts force them to make. These men we call heroes, because to be a hero means to be one out of many, to be oneself. If we refuse to have our actions determined by heredity or environment it is because we seek to base the origin of our actions on ourselves and only on ourselves. The hero's will is not that of his ancestors nor of his society, but his own. This will to be oneself is heroism.

I do not think that there is any more profound originality than this "practical," active originality of the hero. His life is a perpetual resistance to what is habitual and customary. Each movement that he makes has first had to overcome custom and invent a new kind of gesture. Such a life is a perpetual suffering, a constant tearing oneself away from that part of oneself which is given over to habit and is a prisoner of matter.

16: Intervention of Lyricism. Faced with the fact of heroic action—the will to adventure—we can adopt two attitudes: either we rush with it toward sorrow, because we consider that the heroic life has "meaning," or we give reality the slight push which is enough to destroy all heroism, as a dream is shattered by shaking the sleeper. Previously I have called these two direc-

tions of our interest the straight and the oblique. It should be emphasized now that the core of reality, to which both refer, is one and the same. The difference, then, comes from the subjective way in which we approach it. So, if the epic and the novel differ in the objectives—the past and reality—there is still room for a new division within the theme of reality. But this division is no longer based on the object alone; it springs from a subjective element, from our attitude toward that theme.

In the foregoing, lyricism, which is the other source of poetry as opposed to the epic, has been completely left out. This is not the place to seek its essence nor to stop to meditate on what lyricism may be. The time for that will come later. Let it be sufficient to remember what is admitted by everyone: lyricism is an aesthetic projection of the general tonality of our feelings. The epic is neither sad nor gay: it is an Olympian, indifferent art full of forms of eternal, ageless objects; it is an extrinsic, invulnerable art.

A changeable and wavering substance enters art with lyricism. The sensibility of man varies in the course of the centuries, with its polarity gravitating sometimes eastward, sometimes westward. There are gay times and times of bitterness. It all depends on whether the estimate which man makes of his own worth seems to him favorable or unfavorable in the last resort.

I do not believe that it was necessary to insist upon what was suggested at the beginning of this short treatise: that poetry and all art deals with the human and only the human—whether the theme of poetry be the past or the present. A landscape is always painted as a background for man. This being so, it cannot help but follow that all forms of art find their origin in the changing interpretations of man by man. Tell me what you feel about man and I shall tell you which art you cultivate.

Since every literary genre, even allowing for some marginal overflow, is a river bed which one of these interpretations of man has opened up, nothing is less surprising than the preference of each epoch for a particular genre. That is why the authentic literature of a period is a general confession of the human spirit at that time.

Returning now to the fact of heroism, we note that sometimes it has been looked at directly and other times obliquely. In the first instance, our glance changed the hero into an aesthetic object which we call tragedy. In the second, it made of him an aesthetic object which we call comedy. There have been periods which have had scarcely any feeling for the tragic, times saturated with humor and comedy. The nineteenth century—a bourgeois, democratic and positivist century—has been excessively inclined to see comedy on earth. The correlation which we have drawn between the epic and the novel is repeated here between the tragic and the comic tendency of our spirit.

17: Tragedy. A hero, I have said, is one who wants to be himself. The root of heroic action may be found, then, in a real act of the will. There is nothing like that in the epic. For this reason Don Quixote is not an epic figure, but he is a hero. Achilles makes the epic, the hero wants it. So that the tragic character is not tragic, and therefore, poetic, insofar as he is a man of flesh and blood, but only insofar as he wills. The will—that paradoxical object which begins

in reality and ends in the ideal, since one only wants what is not—is the tragic theme; and an epoch for which the will does not exist, a deterministic and Darwinian epoch, for example, cannot be interested in tragedy.

Let us not fix our attention too much on the Greek tragedy. If we are sincere, we shall admit that we do not understand it very well. Even philology has not equipped our understanding sufficiently to follow a Greek tragedy. Perhaps there is no work more interspersed with purely historical, transitory motives. We should not forget that it was a religious function in Athens, so that the play takes place within the hearts of the spectators even more than on the boards of the theater. An extra-poetic atmosphere—religion—surrounds the stage and the audience. What has come down to us is like the libretto of an opera, the music of which we have never heard; or like the wrong side of a tapestry woven by faith, showing only the multicolored threads. The Hellenists are puzzled by the Athenians' faith, which they do not know how to reconstruct. Until they find out, Greek tragedy will be a page written in a language for which we do not have a dictionary.

All we see clearly is that the tragic poets of Greece speak to us personally through the masks of their heroes. When does Shakespeare do this? Aeschylus is inspired by a half poetic and half theological motive. His theme is at least as metaphysical and ethical as it is aesthetic. I would call him a *theopoet.* The problems of good and evil, of liberty, of justification, of order in the cosmos, of universal causes trouble him. His works are a progressive series of attacks upon these divine questions. His inspiration seems rather like an impulse of religious reform. He resembles a Saint Paul or a Luther more than an "homme de lettres." By dint of piety he would like to go beyond a popular religion which is insufficient for the maturity of the times. In another place this impulse would not have led a man toward poetry, but in Greece, since religion was less sacerdotal, more flexible and more environmental, theological interest could be less differentiated from the poetic, the political, and the philosophical.

Let us leave aside, then, Greek drama and all the theories which, basing tragedy on some sort of fate, believe that it is the downfall, the death of the hero which gives it its tragic quality. The intervention of fate is not necessary, and although the hero usually is overcome, the triumph of fate, if it does come, does not take away his heroism. Let us listen to the effect that drama produces on the ordinary spectator. If he is sincere he will have to confess that it really seems a little unlikely to him. Twenty times he has been tempted to get up and advise the protagonist to desist, to abandon his position, because the plain man very sensibly thinks that all the bad things happen to the hero through his persistence in such and such a purpose. By giving it up, he could make everything turn out well and, as the Chinese say at the end of a tale, alluding to their former nomadism, could settle down and raise many children. There is no fate, then, or rather what happens is fated to happen because the hero has caused it. The misfortunes of Calderón's *Constant Prince* were fated from the point when he decided to be constant, but he himself was not made constant by fate.

I believe that the classical theories are the victims here of a simple *quid*

pro quo, and that they should be corrected by taking advantage of the impression that heroism produces in the soul of the plain man incapable of heroic acts. The plain man is ignorant of that stream of life in which only sumptuary, superfluous activities take place. He is ignorant of the overflow and excess of vitality. He lives bound to what is necessary and what he does, he does perforce. He is always impelled to act; his actions are reactions. He cannot conceive that anyone should get involved in affairs which are not his concern. Anyone who shows the will for adventure seems a little crazy to him, and in tragedy he sees only a man forced to suffer the consequences of an endeavor which no one forces him to pursue.

Far from the tragic originating in fate, then, it is essential for the hero to want his tragic destiny. Therefore, tragedy always has a fictitious character when regarded from the point of view of the vegetative life. All the sorrow springs from the hero's refusal to give up an ideal part, an imaginary role which he has chosen. The actor in the drama, it might be said paradoxically, plays a part which is, in its turn, the playing of a part, although the latter is played in earnest. At any rate, an entirely free volition originates and produces the tragic process. This "act of will," creating a new series of realities which only exist through it—the tragic order—is naturally a fiction for anyone whose only wishes are those of natural necessity, which is satisfied with what merely exists.

18: Comedy. Tragedy is not produced on the ground level. We have to rise to it, be drawn up to it. It is unreal. If we wish to seek something like it in existing things, we must raise our eyes and fix them on the highest peaks of history. Tragedy assumes a predisposition toward great actions in our spirit; otherwise it will appear like bragging. It does not impose itself upon us with the obviousness and forcefulness of realism, which makes the work begin under our very feet and leads us into it without our being aware of it, passively. In a way, for us to enjoy tragedy it is necessary that we too want it a little as the hero wants his destiny. Consequently, it comes to prey upon the symptoms of atrophied heroism which may exist in us, because we all bear within us the rudiments of a hero; but once embarked along the heroic route we shall see that the strong movements and the exalting impetus which inflate tragedy reecho in our hearts. We shall find with surprise that we are capable of living at a tremendous tension and that everything around us increases its proportions and acquires a superior dignity. Tragedy in the theater opens our eyes so that we can discover and appreciate the heroic in reality. Thus Napoleon, who knew something of psychology, did not wish his traveling company to produce comedies before that audience of conquered sovereigns gathered during his stay in Frankfurt, and he made Talma present the characters of Racine and Corneille.

However, a host of plebeian instincts swarm around the rudimentary hero that we carry within us. For sufficient reasons, no doubt, we usually cherish a great distrust toward anyone who wants to start new ways. We do not demand justification from those who do not try to step off the beaten track, but we demand it peremptorily from the bold man who does. Our plebeian self hates few things more than it hates an ambitious person, and the hero, of course,

begins by being ambitious. Vulgarity does not irritate us as much as pretentiousness. Hence the hero is always only a few inches from falling not into misfortune, for this would be rising to it, but into ridicule. The saying "from the sublime to the ridiculous" formulates this danger which really threatens the hero. Alas for him if he does not justify by an exuberance of greatness, by superlative qualities, his claim not to be like the rest of us, "the run of the mill"! The reformer, the one who attempts a new art, a new science, new politics, spends his lifetime in a hostile, corrosive environment, which supposes him to be a conceited fellow, if not a fraud. He is up against those things the very denial of which makes him a hero: tradition, the accepted, the customary, the ways of our parents, national customs, the typical; in a word, widespread inertia. All this, accumulated in an age-old alluvium, forms a crust several yards deep; and the hero proposes to explode this weighty mass with an idea, which is less than an airy corpuscle suddenly sprung up in his fantasy. The instinct of inertia and self-preservation cannot tolerate it and it avenges itself. It sends realism against him and envelops him in comedy.

Since the character of the heroic lies in the will to be what one is not yet, half of the figure of the tragic protagonist is outside of reality. It is sufficient to pull him by the feet and restore him completely to reality for him to become a comic character. The noble heroic fiction rises above the inertia of reality through the greatest exertions; it lives by aspiration. The future is its witness. The *vis comica* simply accentuates the inclination of the hero toward pure materiality. Reality advances through the fiction, imposes itself on us and reabsorbs the tragic role.[11] The hero made this role part of himself, he fused himself with it. The reabsorption by reality consists in solidifying, in materializing the aspiring intention of the hero upon his person. In this fashion we see the role as a ridiculous disguise, as a mask beneath which a vulgar creature moves.

The hero anticipates the future and appeals to it. His gestures have a utopian significance. He does not say that he is but that he wants to be. Thus, the feminist woman hopes for the day when women will not need to be feminists. But the comic writer substitutes for the feminists' ideal the modern woman who actually tries to carry out that ideal. As something made to live in a future world, the ideal, when it is drawn back and frozen in the present, does not succeed in satisfying the most trivial functions of existence; and so people laugh. People watch the fall of the ideal bird as it flies over the vapor of stagnant water and they laugh. It is a useful laughter: for each hero whom it hits, it crushes a hundred frauds.

Consequently, comedy lives on tragedy as the novel does on the epic. Comedy was born historically in Greece as a reaction against the tragic poets and the philosophers who wanted to introduce new gods and set up new customs. In the name of popular tradition, of "our forefathers," and of sacred customs, Aristophanes puts on the stage the actual figures of Socrates and Euripides, and what the former put into his philosophy and the latter into his verses, Aristophanes puts in the persons of Socrates and Euripides.

Comedy is the literary genre of the conservative parties. The distance between the tragic and the comic is the same as that which exists between wishing to be and believing that one already is. This is the step from the sub-

lime to the ridiculous. The transference of the heroic character from the plane of will to that of perception causes the involution of tragedy, its disintegration—and makes comedy of it. The mirage appears as nothing but a mirage.

This happens with Don Quixote when, not content with affirming his desire for adventure, he persists in believing himself an adventurer. The immortal novel is in danger of becoming simply a comedy. The edge of a coin, as we have suggested, is all that separates the novel from pure comedy. The first readers of *Quixote* must have seen just comedy in this literary novelty. In the prologue of Avellaneda[12] the point is made twice: "Since the whole *Story of Don Quixote de la Mancha* is almost comedy," the above-mentioned prologue begins, and adds later: "Let him [Cervantes] be content with his *Galatea* and comedies in prose, for that is what most of his novels are." These phrases are not sufficiently explained by observing that the generic name of all theatrical work was *comedia* at that time.

19: Tragicomedy. The novelistic genre is, doubtless, comic. Let us not say humorous, because many vanities hide beneath the cloak of humor. First of all, it simply tries to make use of the poetic significance there is in the violent fall of the tragic figure, overcome by the force of inertia, by reality. When we talked of the realism of the novel we should have noted that there was something more than reality enclosed in that realism, something which allowed the latter to attain a poetic power which is so alien to it. Then it will become evident that the poetry of realism does not lie in inert reality but in the force of attraction which reality exercises over the meteorlike ideals.

The upper level of the novel is a tragedy, from which the muse descends, following the tragic as it falls into comedy. The tragic line is inevitable, it must form part of the novel, if only as the very thin edge which limits it. For this reason, I believe that it is desirable to stick to the name found by Fernando de Rojas for his *Celestina:* tragicomedy. The novel is a tragicomedy. Perhaps in *La Celestina* the evolution of this genre reaches a climax, acquiring a maturity which finds its full expansion in *Quixote.* The tragic element, of course, may expand a great deal and even vie in scope and importance with the comic matter of the novel. All degrees and oscillations are possible here.

In the novel as a synthesis of tragedy and comedy, the strange desire hinted at by Plato without any comment has been fulfilled. It was at the Banquet[13] in the early morning. The guests, overcome by the Dionysiac essence, lay dozing in confusion. Aristodemus awoke vaguely "when the roosters were already crowing." He seemed to see that only Socrates, Agathon, and Aristophanes remained awake. He thought he could hear them immersed in a difficult dialogue, in which Socrates argued against Agathon, the young author of tragedies, and Aristophanes, the comic writer, that the poet of tragedy and of comedy ought to be one and not two different men. This episode has not been satisfactorily explained but I have always suspected, when I read it, that Plato, a soul seething with intuitions, was planting here the seed of the novel. If we prolong the attitude taken by Socrates in the *Symposium* in the pale light of dawn, it will seem as if we come up against Don Quixote, the hero and the madman.

20: Flaubert, Cervantes, Darwin. The sterility of what passes for patriotism in Spanish thought is made clear by the fact that the truly great Spanish accomplishments have not been studied sufficiently. Enthusiasm is wasted in sterile praise of what is not praiseworthy and cannot be applied with sufficient energy where it is most needed.

There is need of a book showing in detail that every novel bears *Quixote* within it like an inner filigree, in the same way as every epic poem contains the *Iliad* within it like the fruit its core. Flaubert is not reticent in proclaiming it: "Je retrouve," he says, "mes origines dans le livre que je savais par coeur avant de savoir lire, *Don Quichotte*."[14] Madame Bovary is a Don Quixote in skirts with a minimum of tragedy in her soul. She is a reader of romantic novels and a representative of the bourgeois ideals which have hovered over Europe for half a century. Wretched ideals! Bourgeois democracy, positivist romanticism!

Flaubert fully realizes that the novelistic art is a genre with critical intention and comic sinews: "Je tourne beaucoup à la critique," he writes at the time that he is composing *Bovary;* "le roman que j'écris m'aiguise cette faculté, car c'est une oeuvre surtout de critique ou plutôt d'anatomie."[15] And in another place: "Ah! Ce qui manque à la société moderne ce n'est pas un Christ, ni un Washington, ni un Socrate, ni un Voltaire, c'est un Aristophane."[16] I believe that in matters of realism Flaubert would not appear suspect and that he will be accepted as an unimpeachable witness.

If the contemporary novel makes its comic mechanism less obvious, it is due to the fact that the ideals attacked by it are hardly removed from the reality with which they are attacked. The tension is very weak: the ideal *falls* from a very small height. For this reason it can be predicted that the novel of the nineteenth century will be unreadable very soon: it contains the least possible amount of poetic dynamism. Even today we are surprised that when a book of Daudet or of Maupassant *falls* into our hands we do not feel the same pleasure that we felt fifteen years ago, while the tension of *Don Quixote* promises never to slacken.

The ideal of the nineteenth century was realism. "Facts, only facts," clamors a Dickensian character in *Hard Times.* The how, not the why; the fact, not the idea, preaches Auguste Comte. Madame Bovary breathes the same air as M. Homais—a Comtist atmosphere. Flaubert reads *La Philosophie positive* while he is writing his novel: "C'est un ouvrage," he says "profondément farce; il faut seulement lire, pour s'en convaincre, l'introduction qui en est le résumé, il y a, pour quelqu'un qui voudrait faire des charges au théâtre dans le goût aristophanesque, sur les théories sociales, des californies de rires."[17]

Reality has such a violent temper that it does not tolerate the ideal even when reality itself is idealized. The nineteenth century, not satisfied with raising the negation of all heroism to a heroic form and enthroning the idea of the positive, subjects this aim again to the ordeal of harsh reality. Flaubert lets slip an extremely characteristic phrase: "On me croit épris du réel, tandis que je l'exècre; car c'est en haine du réalisme que j'ai entrepris ce roman."[18]

These generations from which we are directly descended had taken a fatal stand. In *Quixote* the balance of poetic sensibility was already tipping toward

the side of bitterness and it has not even in our day fully recovered. The nineteenth century, our parent, has felt a perverse delight in pessimism: it has wallowed in it, it has drunk it to the last drop and has compressed the world in such a way that nothing lofty could remain standing. A sort of gust of animosity is blown onto us by this whole century.

The natural sciences based on determinism conquered the field of biology during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Darwin believed he had succeeded in imprisoning life—our last hope—within physical necessity. Life is reduced to mere matter, physiology to mechanics. The human organism, which seemed an independent unit, capable of acting by itself, is placed in its physical environment like a figure in a tapestry. It is no longer the organism which moves but the environment which is moving through it. Our actions are no more than reactions. There is no freedom, no originality. To live is to adapt oneself; to adapt oneself is to allow the material environment to penetrate into us, to drive us out of ourselves. Adaptation is submission and renunciation. Darwin sweeps heroes off the face of the earth.

The hour of the "roman expérimental" arrives. Zola does not learn his poetry either from Homer or Shakespeare but from Claude Bernard. The subject matter is always man, but since man is no longer the agent of his acts but is moved by the environment in which he lives, the novel will look for the representation of the environment. The environment is the only protagonist. People speak of evoking the "atmosphere." Art submits to one rule: verisimilitude. But does not tragedy have its own internal independent verisimilitude? Is there not an aesthetic *vero* or talisman—the beautiful—and a likeness of the beautiful? The answer is *no* according to positivism: the beautiful is what is probable and the true lies only in physics. The aim of the novel is physiology.

One night Bouvard and Pécuchet buried poetry in the Cemetery of Père Lachaise—in honor of verisimilitude and determinism.

Notes on the Novel

Decline of the Novel

Publishers complain that novels do not sell well, and it is true that the reading public buys fewer novels while the demand for books of a theoretical character is relatively increasing. This statistical fact, even if there were no more intrinsic reasons, would suffice to make us suspect that something is amiss with the literary genre of the novel. When I hear a friend, particularly if he is a young writer, calmly announce that he is working on a novel I am appalled, and I feel that in his case I should be trembling in my boots. Perhaps I am wrong, but I cannot help scenting behind such an equanimity an alarming dose of incomprehension. To produce a good novel has always been a difficult thing. But while, before, it was enough to have talent the difficulty has now grown immeasurably, for to be a gifted novelist is no longer a guaranty for producing a good novel.

Unawareness of this fact is one component of the aforementioned incomprehension. Anyone who gives a little thought to the conditions of a work of art must admit that a literary genre may wear out. One cannot dismiss the subject by comfortably assuming that artistic creation depends on nothing but the artist's personal power called inspiration or talent—in which case decadence of a genre would be due exclusively to an accidental lack of talents, and the sudden appearance of a man of genius would at any time automatically turn the tide. Better beware of notions like genius and inspiration; they are a sort of magic wand and should be used sparingly by anybody who wants to see things clearly. Imagine a woodsman, the strongest of woodsmen, in the Sahara desert. What good are his bulging muscles and his sharp ax? A woodsman without woods is an abstraction. And the same applies to artists. Talent is but a subjective disposition that is brought to bear upon a certain material. The material is independent of individual gifts; and when it is lacking genius and skill are of no avail.

Just as every animal belongs to a species, every literary work belongs to a genre. (The theory of Benedetto Croce who denies the existence of literary forms in this sense has left no trace in aesthetics.) A literary genre, the same as a zoological species, means a certain stock of possibilities; and since in art only those possibilities count which are different enough not to be considered replicas of one another, the resources of a literary genre are definitely limited. It is erroneous to think of the novel—and I refer to the modern novel in particular—as of an endless field capable of rendering ever new forms. Rather it may be compared to a vast but finite quarry. There exist a definite number of possible themes for the novel. The workmen of the primal hour had no trouble finding new blocks—new characters, new themes. But present-day writers face the fact that only narrow and concealed veins are left them.

With this stock of objective possibilities, which is the genre, the artistic

talent works, and when the quarry is worked out talent, however great, can achieve nothing. Whether a genre is altogether done for can, of course, never be decided with mathematical rigor; but it can at times be decided with sufficient practical approximation. At least, that the material is getting scarce may appear frankly evident.

This, I believe, is now happening to the novel. It has become practically impossible to find new subjects. Here we come upon the first cause of the enormous difficulty, an objective not a personal difficulty, of writing an acceptable novel at this advanced stage.

During a certain period novels could thrive on the mere novelty of their subjects which gratuitously added an induced current, as it were, to the value proper of the material. Thus many novels seemed readable which we now think a bore. It is not for nothing that the novel is called "novel." The difficulty of finding new subjects is accompanied by another, perhaps more serious, dilemma. As the store of possible subjects is more and more depleted the sensibility of the reading public becomes subtler and more fastidious. Works that yesterday would still have passed, today are deemed insipid. Not only is the difficulty of finding new subjects steadily growing, but ever "newer" and more extraordinary ones are needed to impress the reader. This is the second cause of the difficulty with which the genre as such is faced in our time.

Proof that the present decline is due to more fundamental causes than a possibly inferior quality of contemporary novels is given by the fact that, as it becomes more difficult to write novels, the famous old or classical ones appear less good. Only a very few have escaped drowning in the reader's boredom.

This development is inevitable and need not dishearten the novelists. On the contrary; for they themselves are bringing it about. Little by little they train their public by sharpening the perception, and refining the taste, of their readers. Each work that is better than a previous one is detrimental to this and all others of the same level. Triumph cannot help being cruel. As the victor wins the battle at the cost of smashing the foe, thus the superior work automatically becomes the undoing of scores of other works that used to be highly thought of.

In short, I believe that the genre of the novel, if it is not yet irretrievably exhausted, has certainly entered its last phase, the scarcity of possible subjects being such that writers must make up for it by the exquisite quality of the other elements that compose the body of a novel.

Autopsy

It cannot be denied that to us the great Balzac, save for one or two of his books, makes rather difficult reading. Our perceptive apparatus, used to more distinct and genuine spectacles, detects at once the conventional, artificial and *à-peu-près* complexion of the world of the *Human Comedy.* Were I asked why I find fault with Balzac I should answer: Because he is a dauber. What distinguishes the dauber from the good painter? That on the latter's painting the object it represents is there in person, as it were, in the fullness of its being, in self-presence. Whereas the former, instead of presenting the object itself, sets

down on his canvas only a few feeble and unessential allusions to it. The longer we look at his work, the clearer it becomes that the object is not there.

This difference between self-presence and mere allusion seems to me decisive in all art but very specially in the novel.

The subject of *Le rouge et le noir* could be told in a few dozen words. What is the difference between such a report and the novel itself? Certainly not the style. The crucial point is that when we say: "Madame Renal falls in love with Julien Sorel" we merely allude to this fact while Stendhal presents it in its immediate and patent reality.

Now, an examination of the evolution of the novel from its beginnings to our day reveals that, from being pure narration which but alludes, the novel has advanced to strict presentation. At first, the narrative as such kept the reader amused through the novelty of the subject. He was as delighted to listen to the hero's adventures as we are to hear what has happened to a person we love. But soon adventures by themselves lose attraction, and what then pleases is not so much the fortunes of the personages as their self-presence. We enjoy seeing those people before us and being admitted to their inner life, understanding them, and living immersed in their world or atmosphere. From being narrative and indirect the novel has become direct and descriptive. The best word would be "presentative." The imperative of the novel is autopsy. No good telling us what a person is, we want to see with our own eyes.

Analyze such ancient novels as have survived in the appreciation of responsible readers, and it will appear that they all use the autoptic method. Above all *Don Quixote.* Cervantes fills all our senses with the genuine presence of his personages. We listen to their true conversations, we see their actual movements. Stendhal's greatness derives from the same cause.

No Definitions

We want to see the life of the figures in a novel, not to be told it. Any reference, allusion, narration only emphasizes the absence of what it alludes to. Things that are there need not be related.

Hence one of the major errors a novelist can commit consists in attempting to define his personages.

It is the task of science to work out definitions. All scientific endeavor lastly consists in the systematic effort to leave behind the object and to arrive at its definition. Now, a definition is nothing if not a series of concepts, and a concept is nothing else than a mental allusion to an object. The concept "red" contains no red; it is merely a movement of the mind toward the color of this name, a sign pointing in the direction of this color.

It has been said by Wundt, if I remember right, that the most primitive form of a concept is the pointing gesture of the index finger. An infant still tries to take hold of any object that enters his field of vision because his undeveloped sense of perspective prevents him from judging distances. After many failures he gives up and contents himself with indicating the object with his outstretched hand—a symbolic capture. The true function of concepts is to point or to indicate. Science is concerned not with things but with the system of signs it can substitute for things.

Art, on the other hand, urged by a magnificent impulse to see, turns from the conventional signs to the things themselves. There is a good deal of truth in Fiedler's assertion that the aim of painting is to furnish a fuller and completer view of things than can be obtained in the ordinary intercourse with them.

The same, I believe, applies to the novel. In its beginnings the plot may have seemed to form its most important part. Later it appeared that what really matters is not the story which is told but that the story, whatever it might be, should be told well. From our present-day standpoint the primitive novel seems more narrative than the modern. However, this impression may have to be revised. Perhaps a primitive reader resembled a child in that he was capable of seeing in a few lines, in a bare pattern the integral object with vigorous presence. (Primitive sculpture and certain new psychological discoveries of great importance corroborate this belief.) In that case the novel would, strictly speaking, not have changed; its present descriptive, or rather presentative, form would merely be the means that had to be used in order to produce in a limp sensibility the same effect which in more springy souls had been obtained by narration.

When I read in a novel "John was peevish" it is as though the writer invited me to visualize, on the strength of his definition, John's peevishness in my own imagination. That is to say, he expects me to be the novelist. What is required, I should think, is exactly the opposite: that he furnish the visible facts so that I obligingly discover and define John to be peevish. A novelist must proceed in the same way as the impressionistic painters who set down on the canvas such elements as the spectator needs for seeing an apple, and leave it to him to give to this material the finishing touches. Hence the fresh taste of all impressionistic painting. We seem to see the objects of the picture in a perpetual *status nascendi.* In the career of every thing there are two moments of supreme drama: birth and death—*status nascens* and *status evanescens.* Nonimpressionistic painting, superior though it may be in other respects, suffers from one shortcoming: that it presents its objects altogether finished, mummified and, as it were, past. That actuality, that existence in the present tense, which things possess in impressionistic pictures is irremediably missing.

The Novel a Sluggish Genre

Hence the present-day novel must be the opposite of a story. A story relates events; the accent is on action. The fresh mind of a child is interested in adventure as such—perhaps, as we were saying, because the child sees in palpable presence what our imagination is too weak to visualize. Adventures do not interest us; or at least, they interest only the child that, as a somewhat barbarous residue, we all carry inside. The rest of our person is not susceptible to the mechanical thrill of, say, a dime novel; and so we feel, after having finished reading such products, a bad taste in our mouth as though we had indulged in a base pleasure. It is not easy nowadays to invent adventures capable of stirring the superior portion of our sensibility.

Action thus becomes a mere pretext—the string, as it were, that makes the beads into a necklace. Why that string cannot be dispensed with, will

appear later on. At this point I wish to draw attention to the fact that when a novel bores us it is not, as an insufficient analysis may lead us to believe, because "its subject is uninteresting." If that were so we might as well declare the entire species dead and buried. For the impossibility of inventing new "interesting subjects" is all too patent.

No, when we are fascinated by a novel it is not because of its subject, not because we are curious to know what happened to Mr. So-and-So. The subject of any novel can be told in a few words and in this form holds no interest. A summary narration is not to our taste; we want the novelist to linger and to grant us good long looks at his personages, their being, and their environment till we have had our fill and feel that they are close friends whom we know thoroughly in all the wealth of their lives. That is what makes of the novel an essentially slow-moving genre, as either Goethe or Novalis observed. I will go even further and say that today the novel is, and must be, a sluggish form—the very opposite therefore of a story, a "serial," or a thriller.

I have sometimes tried to explain the pleasure—a mild pleasure, to be sure—aroused by certain American films that consist of a long series of episodes. (But the word "episode" is absurd; a work made of episodes would be like a meal composed of side-dishes.) And I found to my great surprise that I felt entertained not by the stupid subject but by the personages themselves. A film in which the detective and the young American girl are attractive may go on indefinitely and never become boring. It does not matter what they do; we simply enjoy watching them. They interest us not because of what they are doing; rather the opposite, what they do interests us because it is they who do it.

Let the reader recall the great novels of former days that have lived up to the high standards of our time, and he will observe that his attention is turned to the personages themselves, not to their adventures. We are fascinated by Don Quixote and Sancho, not by what is happening to them. In principle, a *Don Quixote* as great as the original is conceivable in which the knight and his servant go through entirely different experiences. And the same holds for Julien Sorel or David Copperfield.

Function and Substance

Our interest has shifted from the plot to the figures, from actions to persons. Now, this transference—let it be noted parenthetically—finds a counterpart in what has, these last twenty years, been happening in physics and, above all, in philosophy. From Kant to about 1900 we observe a determinate tendency in theoretical thought to eliminate substances and to replace them by functions. In Greece and in the Middle Ages it was believed that *operari sequitur esse*—actions follow, and derive from, being. The nineteenth century may be said to have established the opposite principle: *esse sequitur operari*—the being of a thing is nothing else than the sum total of its actions and functions.

Should we, by any chance, now be again in the process of turning from action to the person, from function to substance? Such a transition would be indicative of an emerging classicism.

But this question deserves more comment, and it invites us to seek further

orientation through a comparison of the classical French theater with the indigenous Spanish theater.

Two Theaters

Not many things illuminate the finer points of the diversity of French and Spanish destinies so well as the difference of structure between the classical French theater and the indigenous Spanish theater. I do not call the latter classical; for, without detriment to any of its other virtues, the character of classicism must be denied it. The Spanish theater is popular; and nothing in history, as far as I can see, has ever been classical and popular at once. The French tragedy, on the other hand, is an art for aristocrats. Thus it already differs from the Spanish regarding the class of people to which it addresses itself. Furthermore, its aesthetic intention is approximately the opposite of that of our popular playwrights. This must, of course, be understood as referring to both styles in their totality; either may admit of exceptions which are, as always, required to prove the rule.

In French tragedies, action is reduced to a minimum. Not only in the sense of the three unities (we shall yet see how important these are to the novel "that has to be written") but also insofar as the story that is told is cut down to the smallest size. Our theater amasses whatever adventures and changes of fortune it can possibly think of; one feels that the author has to entertain an audience already stirred up by a life of new and perilous experiences. The French tragedian wants to set down on the canvas of a well-known "history," which in itself holds no longer any dramatic interest, three or four significant motives. Mere physical adventures he rather avoids; the events of outer life serve only to present certain inner problems. The author and his audience enjoy not so much the passions and the consequent dramatic entanglements of the personages as the analysis of those passions; whereas in the Spanish theater psychological anatomy of sentiments and characters is infrequent or at least unimportant. Sentiments and characters are taken from without as a whole and used as a springboard from which the drama or adventure takes off for its headlong leap. Anything else would have bored the audience of a Spanish *corral,* an audience of simple souls given to passion rather than to contemplation.

However, psychological analysis is not the last aim of French tragedies; it serves as a vehicle for another purpose which manifestly relates the French theater to Greek and Roman theater. (Seneca's influence on the classical French drama can hardly be overrated.) The aristocratic audience enjoys the exemplary and normative character of the tragic happenings. They go to the theater not to be stirred by Athalie's or Phèdre's anguish but to feel elated by the model deportment of those great-hearted figures. In the last instance, French theater is ethical contemplation, not vital emotion like the Spanish. What it presents is not a series of ethically neutral incidents but an exemplary type of reaction, a repertory of normative attitudes in the supreme crises of life. The personages are heroes, exalted characters, prototypes of magnanimity. There appear on this scene only kings and peers—human beings who, exempt from the common urgencies of life, can freely devote their exuberant energies to purely moral conflicts. Even if we did not know the French society of that

time, those tragedies would suggest an audience of people preoccupied with the high forms of seemliness and with their own perfection. The style is measured and of a noble tenor; it admits of neither coarseness, which may be so enlivening, nor utter frenzy. Passion never loses control of itself; proceeding with meticulous correctness of form, it keeps within the bounds of poetical, urbane, and even grammatical laws. French tragic art is the art of not letting fly, of always subjecting word and gesture to the highest regulative norm. In brief, French tragedies reveal that same will to selection and deliberate refinement that has, generation after generation, mellowed French life and French people.

In every order of life, abandonment is characteristic of the popular spirit. Popular religions have always reveled in orgiastic rites, and their excesses have always been opposed by the religious feeling of select minds. Brahmans fight against magic, Confucian mandarins against Taoistic superstition, Catholic councils against mystic ecstasy. Let us sum up these two antagonistic vital attitudes by saying that for the one, the noble and exacting one, ideal life consists in self-control, while to the other, the popular, to live means to surrender to the surge of emotion and to seek unconsciousness and frenzy in passion, orgies, or alcohol.

The Spanish public found something of the second kind in the fiery plays our poets produced. And this confirms rather unexpectedly the condition of a people of "people" that, in an earlier book,[19] I have maintained to be discernible throughout the history of Spain. Not selection and measure, but passion and abandonment. No doubt, this thirst for strong brew is not conducive to greatness. I am not now concerned with considering the value of races and styles but with briefly adumbrating two contrary temperaments.

In general, the personalities of the men and women in Spanish plays remain blurred. What is interesting about them is not their characters but that they are seen roving through the wide world, tossed about by the whirlwind of adventure. Disheveled ladies lost in the Sierras, who yesterday appeared in grand attire in the soft light of drawing rooms and tomorrow, masked as Moors, may sail into the port of Constantinople. Sudden infatuations, as though by witchery, of burning hearts without gravity. That was what attracted our forefathers. In a delightful essay, Azorín describes a theatrical performance in the *corral* of an old Spanish village. The chivalrous lover, his life hanging by a thread, uses the most precarious moment to propose to his lady in flashy verse sparkling like torches with a wonderful rhetoric full of baroque flourishes and laden with images through which the entire flora and fauna is moving—that rhetoric which in sculpture engenders the post-Renaissance consoles with their trophies, their fruits, their pennants, and their heads of goats and rams. At this moment the dark eyes of one of the spectators, a scholar in his fifties, begin to burn in his waxen face, and with a nervous hand he caresses his grizzled goatee. This paragraph of Azorín's has taught me more about the Spanish theater than all the books I have read.[20] Inflammable matter the Spanish theater was—that is to say, a thing as distinct as possible from the norm of perfection the French theater aspired to be. Not for the sake of watching noble souls behave exemplarily did the good Castilian go to see the famous

play, but to be swept off his feet and to get drunk on the potent draught of the adventures and ordeals of the personages. Over the intricate and varied pattern of the intrigue the poet poured his elaborate volubility—a profusion of glittering metaphors expressed in a vocabulary of darkest shadows alternating with brilliant light, a vocabulary reminiscent of the altar-pieces of that same century. Added to the conflagration of passionate destinies the audience found an imagination all aflame in the fireworks of Lope's and Calderón's quatrains.

The substance of the pleasure contained in our theater is of the same Dionysian kind with the mystic raptures of seventeenth century monks and nuns, those sublime indulgers in ecstasy. Not a grain of contemplation. Contemplation requires a cool head and a certain distance between the object and oneself. When we wish to watch a torrent, the first thing to see to is that we are not swept away by it.

Two opposite artistic intentions, we thus find, are operating in these two theaters. In the Castilian drama the stress is on action, on destinies rich in vicissitudes and, at the same time, on the lyrical embellishment of ornate verse. In the French tragedy the essential thing is the personages themselves and their exemplary and paradigmatic nature. That is why Racine's work impresses us as cold, a monochrome. We feel ushered into a garden where some statues converse and, by displaying the very model of behavior, arouse our admiration to the point of boredom. Lope de Vega's work, on the other hand, is reminiscent of painting rather than sculpture. A vast canvas, now luminous now murky, on which all the figures shine with life and color, noblemen and commoners, archbishops and sea-captains, queens and country lasses, a restless, garrulous, exuberant, extravagant lot, madly swirling about like infusoria in a drop of water. To get a good view of the magnificent mass of the Spanish theater one must not open one's eyes wide as though following the pure line of a profile, but rather keep them half shut with a painter's gesture, with the gesture of Velázquez looking at the Meninas, the dwarfs, and the royal couple.

This point of view, it seems to me, affords the best angle under which to behold our theater today. The experts in Spanish literature—I know very little of it—ought to adopt it; it may prove fruitful and direct the analysis toward the true values of that immense poetical crop.

My purpose here was merely to oppose an art of figures to an art of adventures. For I have a notion that in our time the novel of high style must turn from the latter to the former. Instead of constructing interesting plots—which is practically impossible—it must invent interesting characters.

Dostoevski and Proust

While other great names are setting, carried down into oblivion by the mysterious revolution of the times, that of Dostoevski has established itself firmly in the zenith. Perhaps the present fervent admiration of his work is a trifle exaggerated, and I would rather reserve my judgment for a serener hour. At any rate, he has escaped from the general shipwreck of nineteenth-century novels. But the reasons usually given to explain his triumph and his ability to survive seem to me erroneous. The interest his novels arouse is attributed to their material: the mysteriously dramatic action, the utterly pathological char-

acter of the personages, the exotic quality of those Slavic souls so different in their turbulent intricacy from our clear and neat dispositions. All this may contribute to the pleasure we draw from Dostoevski; only it is not sufficient reason. Moreover, there is a certain questionable quality to these features that makes them as well suited to repelling as to attracting us. We remember that those novels used to leave us with a mingled feeling of pleasure and uneasy confusion.

The material never saves a work of art, the gold it is made of does not hallow a statue. A work of art lives on its form, not on its material; the essential grace it emanates springs from its structure, from its organism. The structure forms the properly artistic part of the work, and on it aesthetic and literary criticism should concentrate. If too much stress is laid on the subject of a painting or a poem, sensitive nerves smell the Philistine. No doubt, as there is no life without chemical processes, thus there is no work of art without a subject. Just as life cannot be reduced to chemistry but begins to be life only when it has imposed upon the chemical laws other original processes of a new and more complex order, so the work of art is what it is thanks to the form it imposes upon the material or subject.

I have often wondered why even experts find it difficult to recognize that form, which to the uninitiated may seem abstract and inefficient, is the true substance of art. The author's or the critic's point of view cannot be the same as that of the unqualified reader who is concerned exclusively with the ultimate and total effect the work has on him and does not care to analyze the genesis of his pleasure.

As it is, much has been said about what is going on in Dostoevski's novels and very little about their form. The extraordinary quality of the events and emotions this formidable writer describes has fascinated the critics and prevented them from penetrating into what, at first sight, seems accidental and extrinsic but in reality forms the essence of the work: the structure of the novel as such. Hence a curious optical delusion. The turbulent, wayward character of his personages is ascribed to Dostoevski himself, and the novelist is looked upon as one more figure in his own novels—which indeed seem begotten in an hour of demoniacal ecstasy by some nameless elemental power, akin to the thunder and brother of the winds.

But all this is mere fancy. An alert mind may indulge in such colorful pictures but will soon dismiss them for the sake of clear ideas. It may be that the man Dostoevski was a poor epileptic or, if one so desires, a prophet. But the novelist Dostoevski was an *homme de lettres,* a conscientious craftsman of a sublime craft, and nothing else. Many a time have I tried in vain to convince Pío Baroja that Dostoevski was, above all, a past master of novelistic technique and one of the greatest innovators of the form of the novel.

There is no better example of what I have called the sluggish character of the genre. Dostoevski's books are almost all extremely long. But the story that is told is usually quite short. Sometimes it takes two volumes to describe what happens in three days, indeed, in a few hours. And yet, is there anything more intense? It is an error to believe that intensity is achieved through an accumulation of occurrences. Just the opposite; the fewer the better, providing they

are detailed, i.e., "realized." Here, as in many other instances, the *multum non multa* applies. Density is obtained not by piling adventure upon adventure but by drawing out each incident through a copious presentation of its minutest components.

The concentration of the plot in time and space, so characteristic of Dostoevski's technique, brings to mind, in an unexpected sense, the venerable unities of classical tragedy. This aesthetic rule, which calls for moderation and restraint, now appears as an efficient means of bringing about the inner density, the high pressure, as it were, within the body of the novel.

Dostoevski never tires of filling pages and pages with the unending conversations of his personages. Thanks to this abundant flow of words the imaginary persons acquire a palpable bodily existence such as no definition could contrive.

It is extremely interesting to watch Dostoevski in his cunning ways with the reader. To a perfunctory observation, he seems to define each of his personages. When he introduces a figure he nearly always begins by briefly giving a biography of that person and thus makes us believe that we know well enough with what kind of man we are dealing. But no sooner do his people begin to act—i.e., to talk and to do things—than we feel thrown off the track. They refuse to behave according to those alleged definitions. The first conceptual image we were given of them is followed by another in which we see their immediate life, independent of the author's definition; and the two do not tally. At this point, the reader, afraid to lose sight of the personages at the crossroads of these contradictory data, sets forth in their pursuit by trying to reconcile the discrepant facts to make a unified picture. That is, he gets busy to find a definition himself. Now this is what we are doing in our living intercourse with people. Chance leads them into the ambit of our life, and nobody bothers officially to define them to us. What we have before us is their intricate reality not their plain concept. We are never quite let into their secret, they stubbornly refuse to adjust themselves to our ideas about them. And this is what makes them independent of us and brings it home that they are an effective reality transcending our imagination. But is not then Dostoevski's "realism"—let us call it that not to complicate things—not so much a matter of the persons and events he presents as of the way the reader sees himself compelled to deal with these persons and events? Dostoevski is a "realist" not because he uses the material of life but because he uses the form of life.

In this ruse of laying false scent Dostoevski indulges to the degree of cruelty. Not only does he refuse clearly to define his figures beforehand, but as their behavior varies from stage to stage they display one facet after another and thus seem to be shaped and assembled step by step before our eyes. Instead of stylizing the characters Dostoevski is pleased to have their ambiguity appear as unmitigatedly as in real life. And the reader, proceeding by trial and error, apprehensive all the time of making a mistake, must work out as best he can the actual character of those fickle creatures.

Owing to this device, among others, Dostoevski's books, whatever their other qualities, have the rare virtue of never appearing sham and conventional. The reader never stumbles upon theatrical props; he feels from the outset im-

mersed in a sound and effective quasi-reality. For a novel, in contrast to other literary works, must, while it is read, not be conceived as a novel; the reader must not be conscious of curtain and stage-lights. Reading Balzac, for example, we are on every page thrown out of the dream-world of the novel because we have bumped into the novelistic scaffolding. However, the most important structural peculiarity of Dostoevski's novels is harder to explain; I will return to it later.

But let me here add that this habit of confusing instead of defining, this condensation of time and space, in brief, this sluggishness or *tempo lento* are not peculiar to Dostoevski alone. All novels that are still readable employ more or less the same methods. As a West European example we may mention all the great books of Stendhal. *Le rouge et le noir,* a biographical novel which relates a few years of a man's life, is composed in the form of three or four pictures, each proceeding within its bounds like an entire novel of the Russian master.

In the last great example of prose narrative—Proust's colossal work—this inner structure becomes even more manifest and is, in a way, carried to an extreme. So slowly does the action move that it seems more like a sequence of ecstatic stillnesses without progress or tension. Reading this "remembrance of things past" we feel convinced that the permissible measure of slowness is overstepped. Plot there is almost none; and not a whit of dramatic interest. Thus the novel is reduced to pure motionless description, and the diffuse, atmospheric character, which is in fact essential to the genre, appears here with exaggerated purity. We feel the lack of a firm and rigid support, of something like the ribs in an umbrella. Deprived of its bones, the body of the novel is converted into a cloudy, shapeless mass. That is why I have said before that action and plot may play a minor part in a modern novel, but that they cannot be entirely dispensed with. They fulfill the same function—a mechanical function, it is true—as the string of a necklace, the ribs of an umbrella, the poles of a tent.

My thesis is that in the novel the so-called dramatic interest has no aesthetic value but forms a mechanical necessity. The reason for this necessity is to be found in a general law of the human soul which deserves a brief exposition.

Action and Contemplation

More than ten years ago I pointed out in my book *Meditaciones del Quijote*[21] that it is the essential task of the modern novel to describe an atmosphere while other narrative literary forms—epics, romances of chivalry, adventure stories, dime novels, serials—relate concrete and clearly outlined actions. Compared with a concrete action, which moves as fast as possible toward a conclusion, atmosphere signifies something diffuse and at rest. Action carries us away in its dramatic course; atmosphere invites to contemplation. In painting, a landscape has an atmospheric theme in which "nothing happens"; a battle piece narrates an isolated, well-defined event. It is not by chance that the technique of *plain air*—that is, of atmosphere—was invented in connection with landscape painting.

As time passes, my first impression has been confirmed. The taste of the

best readers and the intent of the best writers have made it increasingly clear that the novel is destined to be a diffuse genre, and the latest creation of high art in the field of narrative prose, Proust's work, has given a decisive proof by overstressing the nondramatic character of the novel. Proust radically forgoes carrying the reader away through the dynamism of an intrigue and leaves him in a purely contemplative attitude. But it is this radicalism that is to blame for the difficulties and disappointments we experience in reading Proust. At the foot of each page we would implore the author to let us have a little dramatic interest, well though we know that not this but what he gives us so abundantly is the truly delicious fare. What he gives us is a microscopic analysis of human souls. With a pinch of drama—really, we should have been satisfied with almost nothing—the work would have been perfect.

How is this to be explained? Why do we find it difficult to read a novel which we appreciate unless we are accorded a minimum of action which we do not appreciate? I feel certain that anyone who gives some thought to the pleasure he derives from reading the great novels of literature will come upon this same puzzle.

That something is indispensable for something else does not imply that it is in itself estimable. To reveal a crime an informer may be needed, but that does not exonerate the informer.

Enjoyment of art is something that occurs in the mind when one sees a painting or reads a book. In order that this pleasure may be produced the psychic mechanism must function in a certain way, and all the prerequisites for this functioning must be present in the work of art although they may possess no aesthetic value or only a reflected and secondary one. In a novel, I would say, dramatic interest is a psychological necessity—not more, but not less either. But this is not the accepted belief. A suggestive plot is generally regarded as one of the decisive aesthetic factors of which there cannot be too much in a novel. Whereas I believe that action, as it is a merely mechanical element and aesthetically dead weight, ought to be reduced to a minimum. But at the same time, and with a view to Proust, I should consider this minimum indispensable.

The question transcends the range of the novel and even that of art in general and acquires major importance in philosophy. It deals with nothing less than the antagonism between action and contemplation. Two types of men become discernible: one inclined to pure contemplation, the other eager to act, to have a hand in things, to be involved emotionally. What things are can be ascertained by contemplation only. Interest beclouds contemplation; it induces us to take sides and blinds us to certain things while throwing others into undue relief. Science, resolved to do nothing but faithfully reflect the multiform face of the cosmos, adopts, from the outset, a contemplative attitude. Similarly, art is an enjoyment of contemplation.

Contemplation and interest thus appear to be two polar forms of consciousness which in principle exclude one another. A man of action is likely to be a poor thinker, if a thinker at all, while the ideal of the sage, the stoic for instance, is to live detached and to keep his soul motionless like a still lake which impassively mirrors the fleeting skies.

But such a radical contrast is, like all radicalism, a construction of the geometrical spirit. Pure contemplation does not exist and cannot exist. When we stand before the universe unmoved by any personal interest we see nothing well. For the things equally worth seeing are innumerable. No reason speaks for our focusing on one point in preference to another, and our eyes wander aimlessly over an amorphous landscape without order or perspective. It is a humble and hackneyed truth that in order to see one must look and in order to look one must pay attention. Attention is a preference subjectively bestowed upon some things at the cost of others. I cannot focus on the first without losing sight of the second. Attention is like a ray of light which illuminates a zone of objects and creates a penumbra around it.

Pure contemplation claims to be rigorously impartial. The spectacle of the world is taken in without any intervention and distortion on the part of the subject. But at the back of contemplation, as an indispensable presupposition, we now discern functioning the mechanism of attention which directs the eye from within the subject and throws things into perspective according to a value pattern originating in the inner recesses of the person. It is not that attention is given to what is seen but, on the contrary, only what attracts attention is seen well. Attention is a psychological a priori that operates by means of affective preferences, i.e., interests.

Modern psychology has found itself compelled paradoxically to reverse the traditional order of mental faculties. Scholasticism taught: *ignoti nulla cupido*—what is unknown is not desired. The truth is rather the opposite: Only that which has been in some way desired or, to be exact, which has previously aroused interest, is known well. How it is possible to be interested in what is not yet known presents a problem I have tried to solve in my essay "Iniciación en la estimativa."[22]

I cannot now enter upon a subject of such scope. Let everybody look in his own past for the circumstances under which he learned most about the world, and he will find that it was not when he deliberately set himself to seeing and nothing but seeing. It is not the countryside we visited as sightseers that we know best. Tourists, although exclusively preoccupied with observing and thus in a position to carry home the richest booty of knowledge, are known to gather superficial information; their contact with a city or a country is not intimate enough to reveal the peculiar conditions. Peasants, on the other hand, whose relation to the land is one of pure interest, are apt to betray, as anyone who has traveled in rural districts will know, an amazing ignorance of their own country. Of all that surrounds them they know only such things as bear directly on their agricultural concerns.

This indicates that the most favorable position for gathering knowledge—that is, for absorbing the largest number and the best quality of objective data—lies somewhere in between pure contemplation and pressing interest. Some vital interests that are not too narrow and oppressive are required for organizing our contemplation; they must limit and articulate it by imposing upon it a perspective of attention. With respect to the countryside the hunter that hunts for sport may, *coeteris paribus,* be said to know a region best and to come into most profitable touch with all the manifold sides of the ter-

rain. As to cities, we have seen none so well as those in which we lived in love. Love, in gathering all our soul around its delightful object, endowed us with a keener sensibility that took in the environment without making it the deliberate center of vision.

The paintings that have impressed us most are not those of museums we visited "to look at pictures" but may be humble pieces beheld in the twilight of a room where life led us on very different purposes. In a concert a piece of music falls flat that, when a blind man plays it in the street, may move our heart.

It is evident that man's destiny is not primarily contemplative; hence the best condition for contemplation cannot be to make it a directly intended, primary act. Only when it is confined to a secondary part, while the soul is moved by the dynamism of an interest, does our perceiving and absorbing power reach a maximum.

If this were not so, the first man who looked at the universe would have beheld it in its entirety. But as it happens, mankind is discovering the world bit by bit in ever-widening circles—as though each of the vital human situations, each urge, need, and interest had served as a perceptive organ with which to explore a small neighborhood.

Hence it appears that those elements which seem to disturb pure contemplation—interests, sentiments, compulsions, affective preferences—are precisely its indispensable instruments. Any human destiny that does not labor under an unbearable strain can become a tower of contemplation—an observatory—of such scope that none, not even a seemingly more privileged one, can replace it. Thus the humblest and most wretched life is capable of receiving a theoretical sanctification and an untransferable mission of wisdom—although only certain types of existence are possessed of the optimum conditions required for attaining to the highest grades of knowledge.

But enough of generalities. Let us merely keep in mind that there has to be at least a dash of action to make contemplation possible. Since the world of the novel is imaginary the author must mobilize in us some imaginary interest, a bit of excitement that gives our faculty of perceiving a certain guidance and a dynamic support. The reader's thirst for dramatic action has subsided with the sharpening of his psychological insight; and this is fortunate, for present-day novelists are at a loss to invent great new plots. As I see it, they need not be upset. A bit of movement and tension will do. But this bit is indispensable. Proust has demonstrated the necessity of movement by writing a paralytic novel.

The Novel as "Provincial Life"

Hence the order must be inverted: the action or plot is not the substance of a novel but its scaffolding, its mechanical prop. The essence of the novel—that is to say, of the modern novel with which alone I am here concerned—does not lie in "what happens" but precisely in the opposite: in the personages' pure living, in their being and being thus, above all, in the ensuing milieu. Indirect proof of this may be found in the fact that of the best novels we are liable to remember not the events, not what befalls the personages but only the person-

ages themselves. The titles of certain books are like names of cities in which we used to live for a time. They at once bring back a climate, a peculiar smell of streets, a general type of people and a specific rhythm of life. Only then, if at all, some particular scene may come to mind.

Indeed, novelists need not strain to build up an action. Any one serves the purpose. As a classical example of how independent a novel is of the plot I have always regarded a work of Stendhal's which he left less than half finished and which has been published under different titles: *Lucien Leuwen, Le chasseur vert,* etc. The existing part amounts to a considerable number of pages. Yet nothing happens in it. A young officer comes to the capital of a *département* and falls in love with a lady who belongs to the provincial aristocracy. We witness in minute detail the development of this delightful sentiment in the two persons: that is all. When the action begins to become involved, the fragment ends. But it leaves us with the impression that we could have gone on forever reading page after page about life in that corner of France, about the lady of the legitimist party and the young soldier in his amaranthine uniform.

And what else is needed? Above all, let us pause to think what this "else" could be—those "interesting things," those marvelous experiences. In the realm of the novel nothing of the kind exists (we do not now speak of serials or of scientific adventure stories in the manner of Poe, Wells, etc.); here life is precisely daily life. It is in reporting the wonders of the simple, unhaloed hour, not in expatiating on the extraordinary, that the novel displays its specific graces.[23] Not by widening our horizon with tales of unheard-of adventures can the novelist expect to captivate us. The opposite procedure is required: the reader's horizon must be narrowed. Let me explain.

If by horizon we understand the circle of people and events that integrate the world of each of us, we may be misled into believing that certain horizons are so wide and varied that they are particularly interesting while others are too narrow and monotonous to command interest. In point of fact, the duchess whose world seems so dramatic to a young secretary is liable to be quite as bored in her glamorous sphere as the romantic typist in her drab and obscure environment. Being a duchess is as daily a form of life as any other.

The truth is that no horizon is especially interesting by itself, by virtue of its peculiar content, and that any horizon, wide or narrow, brilliant or dull, varied or monotonous, may possess an interest of its own which merely requires a vital adjustment to be discovered. Human vitality is so exuberant that in the sorriest desert it still finds a pretext for glowing and trembling. Living in the city we cannot understand how it is possible to exist in the village. But no sooner has some chance landed us there than we find ourselves vehemently taking sides in the local gossip.

In my judgment, this is of paramount importance to the novel. The author must see to it that the reader is cut off from his real horizon and imprisoned in a small, hermetically sealed universe—the inner realm of the novel. He must make a "villager" of him and interest him in the inhabitants of this realm. For, however admirable these may be, they cannot hold their own

against the beings of flesh and bone who form the reader's daily surroundings and constantly claim his interest. To turn each reader into a temporal "provincial" is the great secret of the novelist. Instead of widening the horizon—what novelistic horizon could be wider and richer than the humblest real one?—he must contract and limit it. Thus and only thus can he make the reader care about what is going on inside the novel.

No horizon, I repeat, is interesting for its content. Any one of them is interesting through its *form*—its form as a horizon, that is, as a cosmos or complete world. Microcosm and macrocosm are equally cosmos; they differ only in the size of their radii; but for a being that lives inside, each has a constant absolute size. We are reminded of Poincaré's remark—which foreshadows the theory of relativity—that, if everything in our world contracted and shrank in the same proportion, we should not notice the difference.

The interdependence between horizon and interest—that each horizon has its interest—is the vital law thanks to which in the aesthetic field the novel is possible.

From this law derive a few norms of the genre.

Imperviousness

Let us observe ourselves the moment we have finished reading a great novel. Is it not as though we were emerging from another world where we were held incommunicado? That there can have been no communication is clear; for we are aware of no transition. A second ago we were in Parma with Count Mosca and La Sanseverina, with Clélia and Fabrice; we lived their lives with them, immersed in their atmosphere, their time and place. Now, abruptly, we find ourselves in our room, our city, our time; and already our accustomed preoccupations begin to stir. There is an interval of indecision and suspense. Perchance a sudden wave of recollection washes us back into the universe of the novel, and with a certain effort, as though struggling through a liquid element, we must regain the shores of our existence proper. Were someone to find us in just that moment, our dilated pupils would betray our shipwrecked condition.

Novel I call the literary prose work that produces this effect. And a novel that lacks this glorious and unique magic is a poor novel whatever other virtues it may possess. Sublime and beneficent the power of this sovereign modern art that multiplies our existence, freeing us from our own self and generously bestowing upon us the gift of transmigration!

To achieve this, the author must begin by luring us into the closed precinct that is his novel and then keep us there cut off from any possible retreat to the real space we left behind. The first is easy; almost any promise finds us ready to enter through the gate the novelist holds open for us. The second is more difficult. The author must build around us a wall without chinks or loopholes through which we might catch, from within the novel, a glimpse of the outside world. For were we allowed to compare the inner world of the book with outer reality and invited to "live," the conflicts, problems, and emotions the book has to offer would seem so small and futile that all their significance would be lost. It would be like looking in a garden at a picture representing a

garden. The painted garden blooms only inside a house against the neutral background of a wall where it is like a window opening into an imaginary noonday world.

In my judgment, no writer can be called a novelist unless he possesses the gift of forgetting, and thereby making us forget, the reality beyond the walls of his novel. Let him be as realistic as can be; that is to say, let the microcosm of his novel consist of unquestionably true-to-life elements—he will have lost out if he cannot keep us from remembering that there exists an extramural world.

Hence every novel is still-born that is laden with transcendental intentions, be they political, ideological, symbolical, or satirical. For those themes are of such a nature that they cannot be dealt with fictitiously, they have meaning only in relation to the actual horizon of each individual. As soon as they are broached we feel expelled from the imaginary sphere of the novel and compelled to establish contact with the absolute realm on which our real existence depends. How can we care about the imaginary destinies of his personages when the author forces us to face the acute problem of our own political or metaphysical destiny? No, he must by all means render us insensible to reality and keep up the hypnosis in which we lead an imaginary life.

This seems to me the cause of the enormous difficulty—if not impossibility—of writing a good historical novel. The aspiration that the imagined cosmos shall at the same time be historically correct leads to a perpetual clash between two different horizons. And since each horizon calls for a special adjustment of our perceptive apparatus we must constantly change our attitude. No opportunity is given us of either quietly dreaming the novel or clearly thinking the historical facts. Again and again we pause, uncertain whether to hold the events and characters against the imaginary or the historical horizon, and this ambivalence imparts a false and uncomfortable complexion to everything. Any attempt to merge the two worlds only leads to their mutual annihilation. The author, we feel, falsifies the historical facts by bringing them too near to us and weakens the novel by removing it too far away from us toward the abstract plane of historical truth.

Imperviousness is but the special form taken on in the novel by the generic imperative of art: to be without transcending consequence. This self-sufficiency of art cannot but irritate all muddleheads. But what are we to do about it, since after an inexorable law everything must be what it is and renounce being something else? There are people who want to be everything. Not content with being artists they want to be politicians and lead the multitude, or to be prophets entrusted with administering the will of God and guiding the consciences of men. But the arts take their revenge on any artist who wants to be more than an artist by letting his work fail even artistically. Conversely, a poet's politics rarely attain to more than an ingenuous, inept gesture.

By virtue of a purely aesthetic necessity the novel must be impervious, it must possess the power of forming a precinct, hermetically closed to all actual reality. From this condition there follows, among many other consequences, that the novel cannot propagate philosophical, political, sociological, or moral ideas; it can be nothing beyond a novel. As little can its inside transcend into any outside as a sleeper's arm can reach out into the waking world to catch a

real object and introduce it into the magic sphere of his dream. The sleeper's arm is a phantom, too limp to lift a petal. So incompatible are the two worlds that their slightest contact abolishes one of them. As children we never could stick a finger through the shimmering skin of the soap bubbles; always those frail, floating globes would vanish in a sudden explosion, leaving a tear of foam on the flags.

This does by no means preclude that a novel, once it has been "lived" in a delightful sleep-walking way, may afterward evoke in us all sorts of vital repercussions. The symbolical meaning of *Don Quixote* is not contained within the novel, we construct it from without when musing over our impressions of the book. Dostoevski's religious and political ideas are not operative agencies within the body of his work; they appear there with the same fictitious character as the faces and the frenetic passions of the figures.

Let all novelists look at the doors of the Florentine baptistery wrought by Lorenzo Ghiberti! In a series of small squares they show the whole Creation: men, women, animals, fruits, buildings. The sculptor was concerned with nothing but to model all those forms one after another. We still seem to feel the trembling delight with which the hand set down the arched brow of the ram Abraham espied in the thicket, and the plump form of the apple, and the foreshortened edifice. Similarly, a novelist must be inspired above all by a wonderful enthusiasm to tell a tale and to invent men and women and conversations and passions. A silkworm enclosed in his magic cocoon, he must forget the world he leaves behind and happily go about polishing the walls of his self-made prison so as to stop up all pores against the air and light of reality.

In simpler words, a novelist while he writes his novel must care more about his imaginary world than about any other possible world. If he does not care, how can he make us care? Somnambulist himself, he must infect us with his divine somnambulism.

The Novel a Dense Form

What I have called the impervious or hermetic character of the novel will be further elucidated by a comparison between the novel and the lyrical poem. We admire a poem when we see it rising miraculously from reality, as the artificial jet of a fountain rises from the surrounding scenery. Poems are made to be looked at from without—the same as statues, the same as Greek temples. They do not interfere with our daily world, or rather, they derive their peculiar grace from establishing amid our reality their naked unreality with Olympian innocence. Whereas the novel is destined to be perceived from within itself—the same as the real world in which, by inexorable metaphysical order, each man forms, in each moment of his life, the center of his own universe. To enjoy a novel we must feel surrounded by it on all sides, it cannot exist as a more or less conspicuous thing among the rest of things. Precisely because it is a preeminently realistic genre it is incompatible with outer reality. In order to establish its own inner world it must dislodge and abolish the surrounding one.

From this imperative derive all the other conditions of the novelistic form that we have pointed out. They all fall under the heading of imperviousness. Thus the imperative of autopsy follows inevitably from the fact that the novel-

ist finds himself compelled to cover the real world with his imaginary world. If we are not to see a thing, if a thing is to be concealed, we must be shown other things that conceal it. But shades are known to cast no shadow and not to screen from sight what is behind them—by these two tokens the dead in purgatory recognize Dante as a trespasser from the land of the living. Instead of defining his figures and their sentiments, the novelist must therefore evoke them in order that their self-presence may intercept our vision of the real world about us.

Now, as far as I can see, there is no other way of achieving this but by supplying a wealth of detail. The reader must be caught in a dense web of innumerable minutely told circumstances. What is our life but an immense agglomeration of trifles?

Since exaggeration always serves to call our attention to the thing in its rightful measure, Proust's work, by overdoing the prolixity and minuteness, has helped us to recognize that great novels are essentially lavish of particulars. Indeed, the books of Cervantes, Stendhal, Dickens, Dostoevski are of the tightly packed sort. All the time we are getting more facts than we can possibly keep in mind, and yet we are left with the impression that beyond those explicitly mentioned others are present potentially, as it were. Great novels are atolls built by myriads of tiny animals whose seeming frailness checks the impact of the seas.

For this reason a novelist should never attack a subject unless he knows it thoroughly. He must produce *ex abundantia.* Where he finds himself moving in shallow waters he will never make good.

Things must be accepted as they are. The novel is not a lithe, agile, winged form. It is not for nothing that all the great novels that we now like best are a bit heavy. The poet may set forth, a wandering minstrel, with his lyre under his arm, but the novelist moves with cumbrous baggage like circuses or nomadic tribes. He carries the furnishings of a whole world on his back.

Decline and Perfection

The conditions so far mentioned merely define the level at which the novel begins; they mark the water-line, as it were, of its continent. In the following we shall be concerned with conditions that determine the higher or lower altitude of a work.

The stuff novels are made of may vary a good deal. It may consist in trite and hackneyed observations, such as an average man uses for the purpose of his existence; or it may contain experiences for which one must probe deep into the secrets of the soul. The quality of the detail is among the factors that decide the rank of a book. The great novelist, contemptuous of the surface features of his personages, dives down into their souls and returns, clutching in his hand the deep-sea pearl. But precisely for this reason the average reader does not understand him.

In the beginnings of the novel the difference between good novels and poor novels was not so great. As nothing had yet been said they all had to begin with saying the obvious. Today, in the great hour of the decline of the genre, good novels and poor ones differ very much indeed. Hence the oppor-

tunity of achieving the perfect work is excellent—though extremely precarious. For it would be rash to assume that the season of decline is unfavorable in every respect. Rather, the works of highest rank are likely to be products of the last hour when accumulated experience has utterly refined the artistic sensitivity. The decline of an artistic genre, like that of a race, affects but the average specimens.

This is one of the reasons why I believe—utterly pessimistic though I feel about the immediate future of the plastic arts and of politics, though not of science or of philosophy—that the novel is one of the few fields that may still yield illustrious fruits, more exquisite ones perhaps than were ever garnered in previous harvests. As a routine production, as an exploitable mine, the novel may be finished. The large veins, accessible to any diligent hand, are worked out. What remains are hidden deposits and perilous ventures into the depths where, perchance, the most precious crystals grow. But that is work for minds of rare distinction.

The last perfection, almost always the fruit of the last hour, has not yet been attained by the novel. Neither its form or structure nor its material has passed through the last crucibles. Regarding the material I find some reason for optimism in the following consideration.

The material proper of the novel is imaginary psychology. Imaginary psychology advances in unison with scientific psychology and psychological intuition which is used in daily life. Now, few things have progressed so much in Europe these last fifty years as the knowledge of the human soul. For the first time in history there exists a science of psychology, in its beginnings only, it is true, but even so without equal in former ages. Add to this a refined ability of divining our neighbor and analyzing our own inner life. All this psychological knowledge accumulated in the contemporary mind through research or through spontaneous experience is to no small degree responsible for the present failure of the novel. Authors that yesterday seemed excellent appear naïve today because the present reader is a much better psychologist than the old author. (Who knows whether the political confusion in Europe, which to my mind is much more alarming and deep-seated than is now apparent, does not spring from the same causes? Who knows whether States of the modern type are not possible only while the citizens live in a state of psychological dumbness?)

A related phenomenon is the dissatisfaction we feel when reading the classical historians. The psychology they use seems inadequate and vague and far from satisfying our apparently subtler taste.[24]

Novelists and historians will hardly fail to make use of this progress of psychology. Humanity has always satisfied its desires if they were clear and concrete. Thus it is fairly safe to predict that—apart from philosophy—history and the novel will furnish the strongest intellectual emotions the near future holds in reserve for us.

Imaginary Psychology

These notes on the novel have so resolutely an air of being interminable that it becomes necessary to cut them short. One more step would prove fatal. So

far they have moved on a plane of ample generality, avoiding entanglements in casuistry. But in aesthetics, the same as in ethics, the general principles form but a system of reference set down with a view to the concrete analysis of special cases. It is with this analysis that the most appealing part of the investigation commences, but with it we also venture into a field without bounds. Thus prudence suggests that I stop here.—I would, however, add one last remark.

The material of the novel, we were saying, is, above all, imaginary psychology. It is not easy to explain in a few words what this means. The current belief is that psychological phenomena, like the phenomena of experimental physics, obey factual laws. If this is so, all the novelist can do is to observe and to copy the real processes in existing souls. But he cannot invent psychological processes and construct souls as the mathematician constructs geometrical figures. Yet the enjoyment of novels presupposes exactly this.

When a novelist expounds a psychological process he does not expect us to accept it as something that has actually happened—who would guarantee its reality?—but he trusts that it possesses an inner evidence, an evidence akin to that which makes mathematics possible. And let it not be said that the psychological development he describes seems convincing when it coincides with cases we have witnessed in life. An awkward thing it would be if the novelist had to rely on the chance experiences of this or that reader of his. Rather we recall that one of the peculiar attractions Dostoevski's work used to hold for us lay in the unfamiliar behavior of his personages. Small chance there is indeed that a reader in Sevilla should ever in his life have met people as chaotic and turbulent as the Karamasoffs. And yet, dull though he may be, the psychic mechanism of those souls seems to him as cogent and evident as the steps of a mathematical proof which uses dimensions never seen by human eyes.

There exists in psychology, just as in mathematics, an evidence a priori. Because of this in either field imaginary construction is possible. Where only facts are subject to laws but no laws obtain that regulate the imagination it is impossible to construct. Any attempt to do so can be no more than an arbitrary caprice.

Because this is not recognized the psychology in a novel is taken to be identical with that of real life, and it is assumed that the author can do nothing but copy reality. So coarse a reasoning lies at the bottom of what is currently called "realism." I cannot now discuss this involved term which I have been careful always to use in quotation marks to render it suspect. Its incongruity will clearly transpire when we observe that it does not even apply to the very works from which it allegedly derives. The personages of those works are almost all of them so different from those we meet in our own environment that, even supposing they were copied from existing persons, we should not recognize them as such. People in a novel need not be like real ones, it is enough that they are possible. And this psychology of possible human minds, which I have called imaginary psychology, is the only one that matters to the novel. That a novel may, apart from this, be concerned with giving a psychological interpretation of actual social types and environments can provide an additional piquancy, but it is not essential. (One of the points I am leaving

untouched is that the novel lends itself more easily than any other literary form to absorbing elements alien to art. *Within* the novel almost anything fits: science, religion, sociology, aesthetic criticism—if only it is ultimately derealized and confined within the inner world of the novel; i.e., if it remains without actual and effective validity. In other words, a novel can contain as much sociology as it desires, but the novel itself cannot be sociological. The dose of alien elements a book can bear, lastly, depends on the author's capability of dissolving them in the atmosphere of the novel as such. But this subject obviously belongs to casuistry, and I drop it terrified.)

This possibility of constructing human souls is perhaps the major asset of future novels. Everything points in this direction. The interest in the outer mechanism of the plot is today reduced to a minimum. All the better: the novel must now revolve about the superior interest emanating from the inner mechanism of the personages. Not in the invention of plots but in the invention of interesting characters lies the best hope of the novel.

Notes

1. The concept of proportion, of measure, which always came to Greek lips when speaking of art, shows clearly its mathematical musculature.

2. "It was believed that the most sacred is the immemorial, the most ancient," says Aristotle, referring to mythical thought. *Metaphysics,* 893, b, 33.

3. "Ma pauvre Bovary sans doute souffre et pleure dans vingt villages de France à la fois, à cette heure même." Flaubert: *Correspondance,* II, 284.

4. The figure of Apollonius is based on material from the story of Antiochus.

5. I would say that, in a certain way, even this is retained. But I would be forced to write many pages, unnecessary here, about that mysterious kind of hallucination which lies, undoubtedly, in the pleasure felt when we read a book of chivalry.

6. In a number of *La Critica* Croce mentions the definition which an Italian gives of a *bore:* one who takes away our solitude and does not give us companionship.

7. We have ignored lyric poetry from the outset, since it is an independent aesthetic tendency.

8. For Aristotle and the Middle Ages anything that does not contain contradiction in itself is possible. What is "*compossible*" needs more. For Aristotle the centaur is possible; for us it is not, because biology, natural science, does not tolerate it.

9. The intention of realism becomes still more obvious in painting. Raphael and Michelangelo paint the forms of things. The form is always ideal—an image of memory or a construction of ours. Velázquez seeks the impression of things. The impression is formless and stresses the material—satin, velvet, linen, wood, organic protoplasm—of which things are made.

10. The love story—the *Erotici*—derives from the new comedy. See Wilamowitz-Moellendorf in *Greek Historical Writing,* 1908, pp. 22–23.

11. Bergson cites a curious example. The queen of Prussia enters the room where Napoleon is. She is furious, screaming, and threatening. Napoleon confines himself to begging her to sit down. When the queen sits down, she is silent; the tragic role cannot be maintained in the bourgeois position suitable for a visit, and it collapses upon the one who plays it.

12. Author of an apocryphal pt. II of *Don Quixote.* Trans.

13. Plato, *Symposium.* Trans.

14. *Correspondance,* II, 16.

15. Ibid., 370.

16. Ibid., 159.

17. Loc. cit., II, 261.

18. *Correspondance,* III, 67–68. See what he writes on his *Dictionnaire des idées reçues:* Gustavus Flaubertus, Bourgeoisophobus.

19. Cf. the author's book *Invertebrate Spain.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1937.

20. Cf. Américo Castro's introduction to the plays of Tirso de Molina, Clásicos Castellanos, Ediciones de la Lectura, Madrid.

21. *Meditaciones del Quijote.* Madrid: Calpe, 1913.

22. Cf. *Revista de Occidente,* No. IV.

23. This aesthetic stress on the daily and this strict preclusion of marvels and wonders is essential to the modern novel. It characterizes *Don Quixote* in contrast to the romances of chivalry. Indeed, were we to determine the conditions of the modern novel, we should only need to ascertain what a literary prose production must look like that makes a principle of eliminating marvels.

24. Cf. for this point the author's essay "Las Atlántidas" in his collected works: *Obras* (Espasa Calpe, 1932), II, 821.

Part Six

Grand Theory III

In Mikhail Bakhtin we encounter a historical theory of the novel that is both powerfully related to Lukács and Ortega and powerfully distinctive in its idiom and focus. Like them, Bakhtin speaks of the absolute inaccesibility of the epic past as fundamentally different from the novelistic experience of a continuous and contingent temporality.[1] The novel destroys this "epic distance" by disclosing another sort of "distance": that between "language" and "reality." "[O]nly in the novel have we the possibility of an authentically objective portrayal of the past as the past." If a homogenizing memory is the motor of epic, the novel runs on the fuel of knowledge and epistemology, which insists upon a separation or distance between the "object" of knowledge and the means, linguistic and other, by which the subject comes to know it. There is hence a kinship between the innovative and experimental methods of the novel and of science, both of which employ a technique of "objectification"[2] to the end of "objectivity." Recalling but eclipsing Ortega's interest,[3] Bakhtin makes mimicry and parody the crucial technique of novelistic scientific method. Epic "displays a profound piety toward . . . the language of tradition." Novelistic laughter on the contrary "destroys any hierarchical (distancing and valorized) distance." "It is as if such mimicry rips the word away from its object, disunifies the two, shows that a given straightforward generic word—epic or tragic—is one-sided, bounded, incapable of exhausting the object; the process of parodying forces us to experience those sides of the object that are not otherwise included in a given genre or a given style."

In Bakhtin's usage we see what is evident also in Lukács and Lévi-Strauss: empirical objectivity and self-conscious reflexivity are two sides of the same coin of modern epistemological "distance." To parody, to objectify, is to isolate linguistic form so that it coalesces before us as content: "Language in the novel not only represents, but itself serves as the object of representation. Novelistic discourse is always criticizing itself." "In a parodied sonnet, the sonnet form is not a genre at all; that is, it is not the form of a whole but is rather *the object of representation:* the sonnet here is *the hero of the parody.*" This thematization of form in Bakhtin is not a process whereby one linguistic level subsumes or sublates another. Rather, it is (like Lukács's "double reflection") a dialectical coexistence: "All these languages, with all the direct expressive means at their dis-

1. See Lukács, *Theory,* "The Romanticism of Disillusionment"; Ortega, *Meditations,* "The Epic."

2. Compare Lukács's "objectivation," *Theory.*

3. See *Meditations,* "Mime."

posal, themselves become the object of representation. . . . But at the same time these represented languages themselves do the work of representing." By the same token, novelistic characterization refracts the epic "individual," for whom "[t]here is not the slightest gap between his authentic essence and its external manifestation," so as to set in motion an oscillation between individual and type. "Outside his destiny, the epic and tragic hero is nothing; he is, therefore, a function of the plot fate assigns him. . . . One of the basic internal themes of the novel is precisely the theme of the hero's inadequacy to his fate or his situation."[4]

To observe the deep analytic connection between Bakhtin and Lukács, however, is also to observe the evaluative gulf that divides them. In his most famous figure, the early Lukács conceives novelistic distance as the condition of modern "homelessness." Bakhtin briefly employs the same figure to opposite ends—to describe the state of novelistic distance in antiquity: "[I]n ancient times the parodic-travestying word was (generically speaking) homeless." Lukács regrets the loss of the traditional, positive freedom of relation; Bakhtin celebrates the modern, negative freedom of liberation. In (the later) Lukács the term "novelization" plays the limited role of describing a process by which the historical dominance of the novel can impose upon other genres formal features that are "alien in nature" to those genres. In Bakhtin, "the novelization of other genres does not imply their subjection to an alien generic canon; on the contrary, novelization implies their liberation from all that serves as a brake on their unique development, from all that would change them along with the novel into some sort of stylization of forms that have outlived themselves."[5]

The range and malleability of Bakhtin's "novelization" suggests an extrageneric scope: "It is of course impossible to explain the phenomenon of novelization purely by reference to the direct and unmediated influence of the novel itself." Elsewhere Bakhtin speaks of genre "not in its formalistic sense, but as a zone and field of valorized perception, as a mode for representing the world." We may recall here the later Lukács's implication[6] that a fully historical method ultimately must acknowledge the continuity between the categories of genre and mode. However, Bakhtin's formulation equally recalls Frye's doubled use of the term "romance"; or, more generally (and with a crucial evaluative reversal), the structuralist dichotomization of structure and history.[7] If "the novelization of the other genres" entails "a battle to drag them into a zone of contact with reality," novelization, an affirmative "displacement," would seem to be nothing less than the positive principle of historical change itself.

4. Compare Lukács, *Historical Novel,* on the difference between the "personal" and the "class" individual.

5. Bertolt Brecht's "epic theater" brilliantly employs the generic alienation effects entailed in Lukács's sense of "novelization" to fulfill a Bakhtinian sense of the term. For Brecht, see "The Modern Theatre Is the Epic Theatre," in *Brecht on Theatre,* ed. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 33–42.

6. See above, headnote to pt. 4.

7. See above, headnote to pt. 2.

As these comparisons suggest, Bakhtin's theory of the novel represents the most radically evolutionary challenge available to the devolutionary historiography of structuralist theory—an achievement that carries with it the danger of forfeiting dialectical method as it were from the other direction. How fully would Bakhtin have us credit his strikingly absolute characterization of the classical, not-yet-novelized genres as "straightforward," "fixed," "rigid," "ossified," "walled off"? How are we to reconcile this view with the admission that "there never was a single strictly straightforward genre, no single type of direct discourse . . . that did not have its own parodying and travestying double" which was sometimes "just as sanctioned by tradition and just as canonized as [its] elevated model"? If the early Lukács conceives the novel in terms of psychological self-consciousness, and Ortega in terms of visual perspective, Bakhtin's distinction is to conceive the novel in terms of linguistic structure and function. Working within and against a specific formation of linguistic theory, Bakhtin elaborates a historical theory of language whose dialectical acuity depends very heavily on the riskiness of dichotomous formulation.

From a sufficient elevation, a linguistic historiography can appear to consist in the discontinuous "rupture" of a cultural monoglossia by an external and invasive polyglossia. Here the decisive context is the monoglot homogeneity of late medieval Europe on the one hand, and "the active polyglossia of the new world" on the other. Yet the invasion is of course neither so discontinuous nor so external as this would suggest. The Latin monoglossia of late medieval Europe was also disrupted "internally" by the "new world" of the national vernaculars; and the Renaissance revolution was in any case preceded by that of late antiquity, when the "absolute dogma" of classic Hellenism's "dense monoglossia" was both challenged and reinforced by Roman and barbarian linguistic influence. Whatever the appearance, moreover, Bakhtin is always concerned not with an absolute distinction between the monoglot and the polyglot but with the qualitative and sociological difference between "literary" and "popular" usage. In these terms, "[p]olyglossia had always existed (it is more ancient than pure, canonic monoglossia), but it had not been a factor in literary creation."

The more closely we enter into the terms of concrete language use, the more compatible Bakhtin's version of tradition and innovation becomes both with Lukács's dialectic of direct givenness and self-consciousness and with Ortega's dialectic of simple and oblique perspective. "[A]n illiterate peasant, miles away from any urban center, naïvely immersed in an unmoving and for him unshakeable everyday world, nevertheless lived in several language systems. . . . But these languages were not dialogically coordinated in the linguistic consciousness of the peasant; he passed from one to the other without thinking, automatically. . . . As soon as a critical interanimation of languages began to occur in the consciousness of our peasant, . . . the inviolability and predetermined quality of these languages came to an end, and the necessity of actively choosing one's orientation among them began."

That this process can't be thought in absolute, once-for-all terms is clear from Bakhtin's theorization of polyglossia at the micro-level of concrete, in-

tralinguistic heteroglossia: "Closely connected with the problem of polyglossia and inescapable from it is the problem of heteroglossia *within* a language. . . . The novel senses itself on the border between the completed, dominant literary language and the extraliterary languages that know heteroglossia." "[A]t any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom." "Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language, . . . and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the [centrifugal] realities of heteroglossia." But abstract theoretical expression can "oppose" what concrete historical experience must conflate: "Every utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia."

As he makes clear, Bakhtin formulates his historical linguistics against a reigning Saussurean model, whose structuralist theorization of *langue* and *parole,* synchronic language system and diachronic individual utterance, unconditionally dichotomizes linguistic elements that he would conceive dialectically. Like the later Lukács (although within a distinct strain of Marxist thought), Bakhtin pursues the historicity of novelistic usage to the point at which synchrony bleeds into diachrony.[8] In these terms, Bakhtinian "novelization" might be understood as a feature of all utterance which becomes generically specified and actualized as "the novel" under the intense polyglossia of early modernity. On the one hand, classical antiquity already knew the "cheerfully irreverent quotation marks" characteristic of generic parody. But on the other hand, the dialogic effect of free indirect discourse,[9] whereby the "novelistic image of another's style . . . must be taken in *intonational quotation marks* within the system of direct authorial speech," is the most distinctive historical marker of novelistic discourse in the specific and generic sense of that term. In Ortega's account of the modernist novel we see the problem-solving mechanism of the novel genre operating in the dimension of historical diachrony to accommodate the formal dissonance of form-as-content within the interior realm of character. In his preoccupation with the micro-dialectics of language use, Bakhtin works within the dimension of historical synchrony to show that the matching of matter to form peculiar to the novel genre takes place not only at the most general, but also at the most minute and local, levels of composition.

8. See above, headnote to pt. 4. Deeply influenced by Russian formalism as much as by Russian Marxism, Bakhtin followed Viktor Shklovsky in the direction of Bertolt Brecht. Like his other oppositions (e.g., epic versus novel), Bakhtin's apparent dichotomization of "poetry" versus "novel," of poetic ambiguity versus prosaic double-voicedness, requires an alertly dialectical reader. Similarly, his tendency to personify language, to attribute to it intentional and even appropriative agency, points both toward the historical materialist view of language as social practice and toward the (post)structuralist tendency toward linguistic fetishization.

9. On free indirect discourse see below, chs. 21, 22.

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Mikhail M. Bakhtin

From The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays

Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel

The study of the novel as a genre is distinguished by peculiar difficulties. This is due to the unique nature of the object itself: the novel is the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted. The forces that define it as a genre are at work before our very eyes: the birth and development of the novel as a genre takes place in the full light of the historical day. The generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities.

We know other genres, as genres, in their completed aspect, that is, as more or less fixed pre-existing forms into which one may then pour artistic experience. The primordial process of their formation lies outside historically documented observation. We encounter the epic as a genre that has not only long since completed its development, but one that is already antiquated. With certain reservations we can say the same for the other major genres, even for tragedy. The life they have in history, the life with which we are familiar, is the life they have lived as already completed genres, with a hardened and no longer flexible skeleton. Each of them has developed its own canon that operates in literature as an authentic historical force.

All these genres, or in any case their defining features, are considerably older than written language and the book, and to the present day they retain their ancient oral and auditory characteristics. Of all the major genres only the novel is younger than writing and the book: it alone is organically receptive to new forms of mute perception, that is, to reading. But of critical importance here is the fact that the novel has no canon of its own, as do other genres; only individual examples of the novel are historically active, not a generic canon as such. Studying other genres is analogous to studying dead languages; studying the novel, on the other hand, is like studying languages that are not only alive, but still young.

This explains the extraordinary difficulty inherent in formulating a theory of the novel. For such a theory has at its heart an object of study completely different from that which theory treats in other genres. The novel is not merely

The numbered notes to this chapter are the author's. Those designated by letters are by the editor of the original volume.

one genre among other genres. Among genres long since completed and in part already dead, the novel is the only developing genre. It is the only genre that was born and nourished in a new era of world history and therefore it is deeply akin to that era, whereas the other major genres entered that era as already fixed forms, as an inheritance, and only now are they adapting themselves—some better, some worse—to the new conditions of their existence. Compared with them, the novel appears to be a creature from an alien species. It gets on poorly with other genres. It fights for its own hegemony in literature; wherever it triumphs, the other older genres go into decline. Significantly, the best book on the history of the ancient novel—that by Erwin Rohde[a]—does not so much recount the history of the novel as it does illustrate the process of disintegration that affected all major genres in antiquity.

The mutual interaction of genres within a single unified literary period is a problem of great interest and importance. In certain eras—the Greek classical period, the Golden Age of Roman literature, the neoclassical period—all genres in "high" literature (that is, the literature of ruling social groups) harmoniously reinforce each other to a significant extent; the whole of literature, conceived as a totality of genres, becomes an organic unity of the highest order. But it is characteristic of the novel that it never enters into this whole, it does not participate in any harmony of the genres. In these eras the novel has an unofficial existence, outside "high" literature. Only already completed genres, with fully formed and well-defined generic contours, can enter into such a literature as a hierarchically organized, organic whole. They can mutually delimit and mutually complement each other, while yet preserving their own generic natures. Each is a unit, and all units are interrelated by virtue of certain features of deep structure that they all have in common.

The great organic poetics of the past—those of Aristotle, Horace, Boileau—are permeated with a deep sense of the wholeness of literature and of the harmonious interaction of all genres contained within this whole. It is as if they literally hear this harmony of the genres. In this is their strength—the inimitable, all-embracing fullness and exhaustiveness of such poetics. And they all, as a consequence, ignore the novel. Scholarly poetics of the nineteenth century lack this integrity: they are eclectic, descriptive; their aim is not a living and organic fullness but rather an abstract and encyclopedic comprehensiveness. They do not concern themselves with the actual possibility of specific genres coexisting within the living whole of literature in a given era; they are concerned rather with their coexistence in a maximally complete anthology. Of course these poetics can no longer ignore the novel—they simply add it (albeit in a place of honor) to already existing genres (and thus it enters the roster as merely one genre among many; in literature conceived as a living whole, on the other hand, it would have to be included in a completely different way).

We have already said that the novel gets on poorly with other genres. There can be no talk of a harmony deriving from mutual limitation and complementariness. The novel parodies other genres (precisely in their role as genres); it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar struc-

ture, re-formulating and re-accentuating them. Historians of literature sometimes tend to see in this merely the struggle of literary tendencies and schools. Such struggles of course exist, but they are peripheral phenomena and historically insignificant. Behind them one must be sensitive to the deeper and more truly historical struggle of genres, the establishment and growth of a generic skeleton of literature.

Of particular interest are those eras when the novel becomes the dominant genre. All literature is then caught up in the process of "becoming," and in a special kind of "generic criticism." This occurred several times in the Hellenic period, again during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but with special force and clarity beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century. In an era when the novel reigns supreme, almost all the remaining genres are to a greater or lesser extent "novelized": drama (for example Ibsen, Hauptmann, the whole of Naturalist drama), epic poetry (for example, *Childe Harold* and especially Byron's *Don Juan*), even lyric poetry (as an extreme example, Heine's lyrical verse). Those genres that stubbornly preserve their old canonic nature begin to appear stylized. In general any strict adherence to a genre begins to feel like a stylization, a stylization taken to the point of parody, despite the artistic intent of the author. In an environment where the novel is the dominant genre, the conventional languages of strictly canonical genres begin to sound in new ways, which are quite different from the ways they sounded in those eras when the novel was *not* included in "high" literature.

Parodic stylizations of canonized genres and styles occupy an essential place in the novel. In the era of the novel's creative ascendency—and even more so in the periods of preparation preceding this era—literature was flooded with parodies and travesties of all the high genres (parodies precisely of genres, and not of individual authors or schools)—parodies that are the precursors, "companions" to the novel, in their own way studies for it. But it is characteristic that the novel does not permit any of these various individual manifestations of itself to stabilize. Throughout its entire history there is a consistent parodying or travestying of dominant or fashionable novels that attempt to become models for the genre: parodies on the chivalric romance of adventure (*Dit d'aventures,* the first such parody, belongs to the thirteenth century), on the Baroque novel, the pastoral novel (Sorel's *Le Berger extravagant*),[b] the Sentimental novel (Fielding, and *The Second Grandison*[c] of Musäus) and so forth. This ability of the novel to criticize itself is a remarkable feature of this ever-developing genre.

What are the salient features of this novelization of other genres suggested by us above? They become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia and the "novelistic" layers of literary language, they become dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humor, elements of self-parody and finally—this is the most important thing—the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality (the openended present). As we will see below, all these phenomena are explained by the transposition of other genres into this new and peculiar zone

for structuring artistic models (a zone of contact with the present in all its openendedness), a zone that was first appropriated by the novel.

It is of course impossible to explain the phenomenon of novelization purely by reference to the direct and unmediated influence of the novel itself. Even where such influence can be precisely established and demonstrated, it is intimately interwoven with those direct changes in reality itself that also determine the novel and that condition its dominance in a given era. The novel is the only developing genre and therefore it reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the process of its unfolding. Only that which is itself developing can comprehend development as a process. The novel has become the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it. In many respects the novel has anticipated, and continues to anticipate, the future development of literature as a whole. In the process of becoming the dominant genre, the novel sparks the renovation of all other genres, it infects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness. It draws them ineluctably into its orbit precisely because this orbit coincides with the basic direction of the development of literature as a whole. In this lies the exceptional importance of the novel, as an object of study for the theory as well as the history of literature.

Unfortunately, historians of literature usually reduce this struggle between the novel and other already completed genres, all these aspects of novelization, to the actual real-life struggle among "schools" and "trends." A novelized poem, for example, they call a "romantic poem" (which of course it is) and believe that in so doing they have exhausted the subject. They do not see beneath the superficial hustle and bustle of literary process the major and crucial fates of literature and language, whose great heroes turn out to be first and foremost genres, and whose "trends" and "schools" are but second- or third-rank protagonists.

The utter inadequacy of literary theory is exposed when it is forced to deal with the novel. In the case of other genres literary theory works confidently and precisely, since there is a finished and already formed object, definite and clear. These genres preserve their rigidity and canonic quality in all classical eras of their development; variations from era to era, from trend to trend or school to school are peripheral and do not affect their ossified generic skeleton. Right up to the present day, in fact, theory dealing with these already completed genres can add almost nothing to Aristotle's formulations. Aristotle's poetics, although occasionally so deeply embedded as to be almost invisible, remains the stable foundation for the theory of genres. Everything works as long as there is no mention of the novel. But the existence of novelized genres already leads theory into a blind alley. Faced with the problem of the novel, genre theory must submit to a radical re-structuring.

Thanks to the meticulous work of scholars, a huge amount of historical material has accumulated and many questions concerning the evolution of various types of novels have been clarified—but the problem of the novel genre

as a whole has not yet found anything like a satisfactory principled resolution. The novel continues to be seen as one genre among many; attempts are made to distinguish it as an already completed genre from other already completed genres, to discover its internal canon—one that would function as a well-defined system of rigid generic factors. In the vast majority of cases, work on the novel is reduced to mere cataloging, a description of all variants on the novel—albeit as comprehensive as possible. But the results of these descriptions never succeed in giving us as much as a hint of comprehensive formula for the novel as a genre. In addition, the experts have not managed to isolate a single definite, stable characteristic of the novel—without adding a reservation, which immediately disqualifies it altogether as a generic characteristic.

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I find three basic characteristics that fundamentally distinguish the novel in principle from other genres: (1) its stylistic three-dimensionality, which is linked with the multi-languaged consciousness realized in the novel; (2) the radical change it effects in the temporal coordinates of the literary image; (3) the new zone opened by the novel for structuring literary images, namely, the zone of maximal contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its openendedness.

These three characteristics of the novel are all organically interrelated and have all been powerfully affected by a very specific rupture in the history of European civilization: its emergence from a socially isolated and culturally deaf semipatriarchal society, and its entrance into international and interlingual contacts and relationships. A multitude of different languages, cultures and times became available to Europe, and this became a decisive factor in its life and thought.

In another work[1] I have already investigated the first stylistic peculiarity of the novel, the one resulting from the active polyglossia of the new world, the new culture and its new creative literary consciousness. I will summarize here only the basic points.

Polyglossia had always existed (it is more ancient than pure, canonic monoglossia), but it had not been a factor in literary creation; an artistically conscious choice between languages did not serve as the creative center of the literary and language process. Classical Greeks had a feeling both for "languages" and for the epochs of language, for the various Greek literary dialects (tragedy is a polyglot genre), but creative consciousness was realized in closed, pure languages (although in actual fact they were mixed). Polyglossia was appropriated and canonized among all the genres.

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In ancient literature it is memory, and not knowledge, that serves as the source and power for the creative impulse. That is how it was, it is impossible to change it: the tradition of the past is sacred. There is as yet no consciousness of the possible relativity of any past.

The novel, by contrast, is determined by experience, knowledge and prac-

tice (the future). In the era of Hellenism a closer contact with the heroes of the Trojan epic cycle began to be felt; epic is already being transformed into novel. Epic material is transposed into novelistic material, into precisely that zone of contact that passes through the intermediate stages of familiarization and laughter. When the novel becomes the dominant genre, epistemology becomes the dominant discipline.

The epic past is called the "absolute past" for good reason: it is both monochronic and valorized (hierarchical); it lacks any relativity, that is, any gradual, purely temporal progressions that might connect it with the present. It is walled off absolutely from all subsequent times, and above all from those times in which the singer and his listeners are located. This boundary, consequently, is immanent in the form of the epic itself and is felt and heard in its every word.

To destroy this boundary is to destroy the form of the epic as a genre. But precisely because it is walled off from all subsequent times, the epic past is absolute and complete. It is as closed as a circle; inside it everything is finished, already over. There is no place in the epic world for any openendedness, indecision, indeterminacy. There are no loopholes in it through which we glimpse the future; it suffices unto itself, neither supposing any continuation nor requiring it. Temporal and valorized definitions are here fused into a single inseparable whole (as they are also fused in the semantic layers of ancient languages). Everything incorporated into this past was simultaneously incorporated into a condition of authentic essence and significance, but therefore also took on conclusiveness and finality, depriving itself, so to speak, of all rights and potential for a real continuation. Absolute conclusiveness and closedness is the outstanding feature of the temporally valorized epic past.

Let us move on to tradition. The epic past, walled off from all subsequent times by an impenetrable boundary, is preserved and revealed only in the form of national tradition. The epic relies entirely on this tradition. Important here is not the fact that tradition is the factual source for the epic—what matters rather is that a reliance on tradition is immanent in the very form of the epic, just as the absolute past is immanent in it. Epic discourse is a discourse handed down by tradition. By its very nature the epic world of the absolute past is inaccessible to personal experience and does not permit an individual, personal point of view or evaluation. One cannot glimpse it, grope for it, touch it; one cannot look at it from just any point of view; it is impossible to experience it, analyze it, take it apart, penetrate into its core. It is given solely as tradition, sacred and sacrosanct, evaluated in the same way by all and demanding a pious attitude toward itself. Let us repeat: the important thing is not the factual sources of the epic, not the content of its historical events, nor the declarations of its authors—the important thing is this formal constitutive characteristic of the epic as a genre (to be more precise, the formal-substantive characteristic): its reliance on impersonal and sacrosanct tradition, on a commonly held evaluation and point of view—which excludes any possibility of another approach—and which therefore displays a profound piety toward the subject described and toward the language used to describe it, the language of tradition.

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Precisely here, in popular laughter, the authentic folkloric roots of the novel are to be sought. The present, contemporary life as such, "I myself" and "my contemporaries," "my time"—all these concepts were originally the objects of ambivalent laughter, at the same time cheerful and annihilating. It is precisely here that a fundamentally new attitude toward language and toward the word is generated. Alongside direct representation—laughing at living reality—there flourish parody and travesty of all high genres and of all lofty models embodied in national myth. The "absolute past" of gods, demigods and heroes is here, in parodies and even more so in travesties, "contemporized": it is brought low, represented on a plane equal with contemporary life, in an everyday environment, in the low language of contemporaneity.

In classical times this elemental popular laughter gave rise directly to a broad and varied field of ancient literature, one that the ancients themselves expressively labeled *spoudogeloion,* that is, the field of "serio-comical." The weakly plotted mimes of Sophron,[d] all the bucolic poems, the fable, early memoir literature (the *Epidēmiai* of Ion of Chios,[e] the *Homilae* of Critias),[f] pamphlets all belong to this field; here the ancients themselves included the "Socratic dialogues" (as a genre), here belong Roman satire (Lucilius,[g] Horace, Persius,[h] Juvenal), the extensive literature of the "Symposia" and finally Menippean satire (as a genre) and dialogues of the Lucianic type. All these genres, permeated with the "serio-comical," are authentic predecessors of the novel. In addition, several of these genres are thoroughly novelistic, containing in embryo and sometimes in developed form the basic elements characteristic of the most important later prototypes of the European novel. The authentic spirit of the novel as a developing genre is present in them to an incomparably greater degree than in the so-called Greek novels (the sole ancient genre bearing the name). The Greek novel [Greek romance] had a powerful influence on the European novel precisely in the Baroque era, that is, precisely at that time when novel theory was beginning to be reworked (Abbé Huet)[i] and when the very term "novel" was being tightened and made more precise. Out of all novelistic works of antiquity, the term "novel" was, therefore, attached to the Greek novel alone. Nevertheless, the serio-comical genres mentioned above anticipate the more essential historical aspects in the development of the novel in modern times, even though they lack that sturdy skeleton of plot and composition that we have grown accustomed to demand from the novel as a genre. This applies in particular to the Socratic dialogues, which may be called—to rephrase Friedrich Schlegel—"the novels of their time," and also to Menippean satire (including the *Satyricon* of Petronius), whose role in the history of the novel is immense and as yet inadequately appreciated by scholarship. These serio-comical genres were the first authentic and essential step in the evolution of the novel as the genre of becoming.

Precisely what is this novelistic spirit in these serio-comical genres, and on what basis do we claim them as the first step in the development of the novel? It is this: contemporary reality serves as their subject, and—even more important—it is the starting point for understanding, evaluating and formulating such genres. For the first time, the subject of serious literary representation (although, it is true, at the same time comical) is portrayed without any

distance, on the level of contemporary reality, in a zone of direct and even crude contact. Even where the past or myth serves as the subject of representation in these genres there is no epic distance, and contemporary reality provides the point of view. Of special significance in this process of demolishing distance is the comical origin of these genres: they derive from folklore (popular laughter). It is precisely laughter that destroys the epic, and in general destroys any hierarchical (distancing and valorized) distance. As a distanced image a subject cannot be comical; to be made comical, it must be brought close. Everything that makes us laugh is close at hand, all comical creativity works in a zone of maximal proximity. Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it. Laughter is a vital factor in laying down that prerequisite for fearlessness without which it would be impossible to approach the world realistically. As it draws an object to itself and makes it familiar, laughter delivers the object into the fearless hands of investigative experiment—both scientific and artistic—and into the hands of free experimental fantasy. Familiarization of the world through laughter and popular speech is an extremely important and indispensable step in making possible free, scientifically knowable and artistically realistic creativity in European civilization.

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It is precisely this new situation, that of the original formally present author in a zone of contact with the world he is depicting, that makes possible at all the appearance of the authorial image on the field of representation. This new positioning of the author must be considered one of the most important results of surmounting epic (hierarchical) distance. The enormous formal, compositional and stylistic implications this new positioning of the author has for the specific evolution of the novel as a genre require no further explanation.

Let us consider in this connection Gogol's *Dead Souls.* The form of his epic Gogol modeled on the *Divine Comedy;* it was in this form that he imagined the greatness of his work lay. But what in fact emerged was Menippean satire. Once having entered the zone of familiar contact he was unable to leave it, and he was unable to transfer into this sphere distanced and positive images. The distanced images of the epic and the images of familiar contact can never meet on the same field of representation; pathos broke into the world of Menippean satire like a foreign body, affirmative pathos became abstract and simply fell out of the work. Gogol could not manage the move from Hell to Purgatory and then to Paradise with the same people and in the same work; no continuous transition was possible. The tragedy of Gogol is to a very real extent the tragedy of a genre (taking genre not in its formalistic sense, but as

a zone and a field of valorized perception, as a mode for representing the world). Gogol lost Russia, that is, he lost his blueprint for perceiving and representing her; he got muddled somewhere between memory and familiar contact—to put it bluntly, he could not find the proper focus on his binoculars.

But as a new starting point for artistic orientation, contemporaneity by no means excludes the depiction of a heroic past, and without any travesty. As an example we have Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*[j] (not, of course, a serio-comical work, but one that does lie on the borderline). Its subject is the past, its hero is Cyrus the Great. But the starting point of representation is Xenophon's own contemporary reality; it is that which provides the point of view and value orientation. It is characteristic that the heroic past chosen here is not the national past but a foreign and barbaric past. The world has already opened up; one's own monolithic and closed world (the world of the epic) has been replaced by the great world of one's own plus "the others." This choice of an alien heroism was the result of a heightened interest, characteristic for Xenophon's time, in the Orient—in Eastern culture, ideology and sociopolitical forms. A light was expected from the East. Cultural interanimation, interaction of ideologies and languages had already begun. Also characteristic was the idealization of the oriental despot, and here one senses Xenophon's own contemporary reality with its idea (shared widely by his contemporaries) of renovating Greek political forms in a spirit close to oriental autocracy. Such an idealization of oriental autocracy is of course deeply alien to the entire spirit of Hellenic national tradition. Characteristic and even extremely typical for the time was the concept of an individual's upbringing: this was to become one of the most important and productive themes for the new European novel. Also characteristic is the intentional and completely explicit transfer onto the image of Cyrus the Great of the features of Cyrus the Younger, a contemporary of Xenophon in whose campaign Xenophon participated. And one also senses here the personality of another contemporary and close friend of Xenophon, Socrates; thus are elements of the memoir introduced into the work. As a final characteristic we might mention the form of the work itself—dialogues framed by a story. In such a way, contemporary reality and its concerns become the starting point and center of an artistic ideological thinking and evaluating of the past. This past is given us without distancing, on the level of contemporary reality, although not (it is true) in its low but in its high forms, on the level of its most advanced concerns. Let us comment upon the somewhat utopian overtones in this work that reflect a slight (and uncertain) shift of its contemporaneity from the past toward the future. *Cyropaedia* is a novel, in the most basic sense of the word.

The depiction of a past in the novel in no sense presumes the modernization of this past (in Xenophon there are, of course, traces of such modernization). On the contrary, only in the novel have we the possibility of an authentically objective portrayal of the past as the past. Contemporary reality with its new experiences is retained as a way of seeing, it has the depth, sharpness, breadth and vividness peculiar to that way of seeing, but should not in any way penetrate into the already portrayed content of the past, as a force moderniz-

ing and distorting the uniqueness of that past. After all, every great and serious contemporaneity requires an authentic profile of the past, an authentic other language from another time.

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We will summarize with some conclusions.

The present, in its all openendedness, taken as a starting point and center for artistic and ideological orientation, is an enormous revolution in the creative consciousness of man. In the European world this reorientation and destruction of the old hierarchy of temporalities received its crucial generic expression on the boundary between classic antiquity and Hellenism, and in the new world during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. The fundamental constituents of the novel as a genre were formed in these eras, although some of the separate elements making up the novel were present much earlier, and the novel's roots must ultimately be sought in folklore. In these eras all other major genres had already long since come to completion, they were already old and almost ossified genres. They were all permeated from top to bottom with a more ancient hierarchization of temporalities. The novel, from the very beginning, developed as a genre that had at its core a new way of conceptualizing time. The absolute past, tradition, hierarchical distance played no role in the formation of the novel as a genre (such spatiotemporal categories did play a role, though insignificant, in certain periods of the novel's development, when it was slightly influenced by the epic—for example in the Baroque novel). The novel took shape precisely at the point when epic distance was disintegrating, when both the world and man were assuming a degree of comic familiarity, when the object of artistic representation was being degraded to the level of a contemporary reality that was inconclusive and fluid. From the very beginning the novel was structured not in the distanced image of the absolute past but in the zone of direct contact with inconclusive present-day reality. At its core lay personal experience and free creative imagination. Thus a new, sober artistic-prose novelistic image and a new critical scientific perception came into being simultaneously. From the very beginning, then, the novel was made of different clay than the other already completed genres; it is a different breed, and with it and in it is born the future of all literature. Once it came into being, it could never be merely one genre among others, and it could not erect rules for interrelating with others in peaceful and harmonious co-existence. In the presence of the novel, all other genres somehow have a different resonance. A lengthy battle for the novelization of the other genres began, a battle to drag them into a zone of contact with reality. The course of this battle has been complex and tortuous.

The novelization of literature does not imply attaching to already completed genres a generic canon that is alien to them, not theirs. The novel, after all, has no canon of its own. It is, by its very nature, not canonic. It is plasticity itself. It is a genre that is ever questing, ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review. Such, indeed, is the only possibility open to a genre that structures itself in a zone of direct contact with developing reality.

Therefore, the novelization of other genres does not imply their subjection to an alien generic canon; on the contrary, novelization implies their liberation from all that serves as a brake on their unique development, from all that would change them along with the novel into some sort of stylization of forms that have outlived themselves.

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From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse

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This novelistic image of another's style (with the direct metaphors that it incorporates) must be taken in *intonational quotation marks* within the system of direct authorial speech (postulated by us here), that is, taken as if the image were parodic and ironic. Were we to discard intonational quotation marks and take the use of metaphors here as the direct means by which the author represents himself, we would in so doing destroy the novelistic image [*obraz*] of another's style, that is, destroy precisely that image that Pushkin, as novelist, constructs here. Lensky's represented poetic speech is very distant from the direct word of the author himself as we have postulated it: Lensky's language functions merely as an *object* of representation (almost as a material thing); the author himself is almost completely outside Lensky's language (it is only his parodic and ironic accents that penetrate this "language of another").

Another example from *Onegin* [1.46, 1–7]:

He who has lived and thought can never
Look on mankind without disdain;
He who has felt is haunted ever
By days that will not come again;
No more for him enchantment's semblance,
On him the serpent of remembrance
Feeds, and remorse corrodes his heart.

One might think that we had before us a direct poetic maxim of the author himself. But these ensuing lines:

All this is likely to impart
An added charm to conversation

(spoken by the posited author to Onegin) already give an objective coloration to this maxim. Although it is part of authorial speech, it is structured in a realm where Onegin's voice and Onegin's style hold sway. We once again have an example of the novelistic image of another's style. But it is structured somewhat differently. All the images in this excerpt become in turn the object of representation: they are represented as Onegin's style, Onegin's world view. In this respect they are similar to the images in Lensky's song. But unlike Lensky's song these images, being the object of representation, at the same time represent themselves, or more precisely they express the thought of the author, since the author agrees with this maxim to a certain extent, while nevertheless

seeing the limitations and insufficiency of the Onegin-Byronic world view and style. Thus the author (that is, the direct authorial word we are postulating) is considerably closer to Onegin's "language" than to the "language" of Lensky: he is no longer merely outside it but in it as well; he not only represents this "language" but to a considerable extent he himself speaks in this "language." The hero is located in a zone of potential conversation with the author, in a zone of *dialogical contact.* The author sees the limitations and insufficiency of the Oneginesque language and world view that was still fashionable in his (the author's) time; he sees its absurd, atomized and artificial face ("A Muscovite in the cloak of a Childe Harold," "A lexicon full of fashionable words," "Is he not really a parody?"); at the same time, however, the author can express some of his most basic ideas and observations only with the help of this "language," despite the fact that as a system it is a historical dead end. The image of another's language and outlook on the world [*čužoe jazykmirovozzrenie*], simultaneously represented *and* representing, is extremely typical of the novel; the greatest novelistic images (for example, the figure of Don Quixote) belong precisely to this type. These descriptive and expressive means that are direct and poetic (in the narrow sense) retain their direct significance when they are incorporated into such a figure, but at the same time they are "qualified" and "externalized," shown as something historically relative, delimited and incomplete—in the novel they, so to speak, criticize themselves.

They both illuminate the world and are themselves illuminated. Just as all there is to know about a man is not exhausted by his situation in life, so all there is to know about the world is not exhausted by a particular discourse about it; every available style is restricted, there are protocols that must be observed.

The author represents Onegin's "language" (a period-bound language associated with a particular world view) as an image that speaks, and that is therefore preconditioned [*ogovorennij govorjaščij*]. Therefore, the author is far from neutral in his relationship to this image: to a certain extent he even polemicizes with this language, argues with it, agrees with it (although with conditions), interrogates it, eavesdrops on it, but also ridicules it, parodically exaggerates it and so forth—in other words, the author is in a dialogical relationship with Onegin's language; the author is actually *conversing* with Onegin, and such a conversation is the fundamental constitutive element of all novelistic style as well as of the controlling image of Onegin's language. The author represents this language, carries on a conversation with it, and the conversation penetrates into the interior of this language-image and dialogizes it from within. And all essentially novelistic images share this quality: they are internally dialogized images—of the languages, styles, world views of another (all of which are inseparable from their concrete linguistic and stylistic embodiment). The reigning theories of poetic imagery are completely powerless to analyze these complex internally dialogized images of whole languages.

Analyzing *Onegin,* it is possible to establish without much trouble that in addition to the images of Onegin's language and Lensky's language there exists yet another complex language-image, a highly profound one, associated with Tatiana. At the heart of this image is a distinctive internally dialogized combi-

nation of the language of a "provincial miss"—dreamy, sentimental, Richardsonian—with the folk language of fairy tales and stories from everyday life told to her by her nurse, together with peasant songs, fortune telling and so forth. What is limited, almost comical, old-fashioned in Tatiana's language is combined with the boundless, serious and direct truth of the language of the folk. The author not only represents this language but is also in fact speaking in it. Considerable sections of the novel are presented in Tatiana's voice-zone (this zone, as is the case with zones of all other characters, is not set off from authorial speech in any formally compositional or syntactical way; it is a zone demarcated purely in terms of style).

In addition to the character-zones, which take up a considerable portion of authorial speech in the novel, we also find in *Onegin* individual parodic stylizations of the languages associated with various literary schools and genres of the time (such as a parody on the neoclassical epic formulaic opening, parodic epitaphs, etc.). And the author's lyrical digressions themselves are by no means free of parodically stylized or parodically polemicizing elements, which to a certain degree enter into the zones of the characters as well. Thus, from a stylistic point of view, the lyrical digressions in the novel are categorically distinct from the direct lyrics of Pushkin. The former are not lyrics, they are the novelistic image of *lyrics* (and of the poet as lyricist). As a result, under careful analysis almost the entire novel breaks down into images of languages that are connected to one another and with the author via their own characteristic dialogical relationships. These languages are, in the main, the period-bound, generic and common everyday varieties of the epoch's literary language, a language that is in itself ever evolving and in process of renewal. All these languages, with all the direct expressive means at their disposal, themselves become the object of representation, are presented as images of whole languages, characteristically typical images, highly limited and sometimes almost comical. But at the same time these represented languages themselves do the work of representing to a significant degree. The author participates in the novel (he is omnipresent in it) with *almost no direct language of his own.* The language of the novel is a *system* of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyze it as a single unitary language.

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The stylistic structure of *Evgenij Onegin* is typical of all authentic novels. To a greater or lesser extent, every novel is a dialogized system made up of the images of "languages," styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language. Language in the novel not only represents, but itself serves as the object of representation. Novelistic discourse is always criticizing itself.

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One of the most ancient and widespread forms for representing the direct word of another is *parody.* What is distinctive about parody as a form?

Take, for example, the parodic *sonnets* with which *Don Quixote* begins.

Although they are impeccably structured as sonnets, we could never possibly assign them to the sonnet genre. In *Don Quixote* they appear as part of a novel—but even the isolated parodic sonnet (outside the novel) could not be classified generically as a sonnet. In a parodied sonnet, the sonnet form is not a genre at all; that is, it is not the form of a whole but is rather *the object of representation:* the sonnet here is the *hero of the parody.* In a parody on the sonnet, we must first of all recognize a sonnet, recognize its form, its specific style, its manner of seeing, its manner of selecting from and evaluating the world—the world view of the sonnet, as it were. A parody may represent and ridicule these distinctive features of the sonnet well or badly, profoundly or superficially. But in any case, what results is not a sonnet, but rather the *image of a sonnet.*

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It is our conviction that there never was a single strictly straightforward genre, no single type of direct discourse—artistic, rhetorical, philosophical, religious, ordinary everyday—that did not have its own parodying and travestying double, its own comic-ironic *contre-partie.* What is more, these parodic doubles and laughing reflections of the direct word were, in some cases, just as sanctioned by tradition and just as canonized as their elevated models.

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For any and every straightforward genre, any and every direct discourse—epic, tragic, lyric, philosophical—may and indeed must itself become the object of representation, the object of a parodic travestying "mimicry." It is as if such mimicry rips the word away from its object, disunifies the two, shows that a given straightforward generic word—epic or tragic—is one-sided, bounded, incapable of exhausting the object; the process of parodying forces us to experience those sides of the object that are not otherwise included in a given genre or a given style. Parodic-travestying literature introduces the permanent corrective of laughter, of a critique on the one-sided seriousness of the lofty direct word, the corrective of reality that is always richer, more fundamental and most importantly *too contradictory and heteroglot* to be fit into a high and straightforward genre. The high genres are monotonic, while the "fourth drama" and genres akin to it retain the ancient binary tone of the word. Ancient parody was free of any nihilistic denial. It was not, after all, the heroes who were parodied, nor the Trojan War and its participants; what was parodied was only its epic heroization; not Hercules and his exploits but their tragic heroization. The genre itself, the style, the language are all put in cheerfully irreverent quotation marks, and they are perceived against a backdrop of a contradictory reality that cannot be confined within their narrow frames. The direct and serious word was revealed, in all its limitations and insufficiency, only after it had become the laughing image of that word—but it was by no means discredited in the process. Thus it did not bother the Greeks to think that Homer himself wrote a parody of Homeric style.

Evidence from Roman literature casts additional light on the problem of the "fourth drama." In Rome its functions were filled by the Atellan literary

farces. When, beginning with the period of Sulla, the Atellan farces were reworked for literature and fixed in texts, they were staged after the tragedy, during the exodium.[k] Thus the Atellan farces[l] of Pomponius[m] and Novius[n] were performed after the tragedies of Accius.[o] The strictest correspondence was observed between the Atellan farces and the tragedies. The insistence upon a single source for both the serious and the comic material was more strict and sustained in Rome than had been the case in Greece. At a later date, the Atellan farces that had been performed during the tragedic exodium were replaced by mimes: apparently they also travestied the material of the preceding tragedy.

The attempt to accompany every tragic (or serious) treatment of material with a parallel comic (parodic-travestying) treatment also found its reflection in the graphic arts of the Romans. In the so-called "consular diptychs," comic scenes in grotesque masks were usually depicted on the left, while on the right were found tragic scenes. An analogous counterposing of scenes can also be observed in the mural paintings in Pompeii. Dieterich, who made use of the Pompeiian paintings to unlock the secret of ancient comic forms, describes, for example, two frescoes arranged facing each other: on the one we see Andromeda being rescued by Perseus, on the opposite wall is a picture of a naked woman bathing in a pond with a serpent wrapped around her; peasants are trying to come to her aid with sticks and stones.[2] This is an obvious parodic travesty of the first mythological scene. The plot of the myth is relocated in a specifically prosaic reality; Perseus himself is replaced by peasants with rude weapons (compare the knightly world of Don Quixote translated into Sancho's language).

From a whole series of sources, and particularly from the fourteenth book of Atheneus, we know of the existence of an enormous world of highly heterogeneous parodic-travestying forms; we know, for instance, of the performances of phallophors[p] and deikelists[q] [mimers] who on the one hand travestied national and local myths and on the other mimicked the characteristically typical "languages" and speech mannerisms of foreign doctors, procurers, *hetaerae,* peasants, slaves and so forth. The parodic-travestying literature of southern Italy was especially rich and varied. Comic parodic plays and riddles flourished there, as did parodies of the speeches of scholars and judges, and forms of parodic and agonic dialogues, one of whose variants became a structural component of Greek comedy. Here the word lived an utterly different life from that which it lived in the high, straightforward genres of Greece.

It is worth remembering that the most primitive mime, that is, a wandering actor of the most banal sort, always had to possess, as a professional minimum, two skills: the ability to imitate the voices of birds and animals, and the ability to mimic the speech, facial expressions and gesticulation of a slave, a peasant, a procurer, a scholastic pedant and a foreigner. To this very day this is still the stock-in-trade for the farcical actor-impersonators at annual fairs.

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Some forms of parodic-travestying literature issue directly from the form of the genres being parodied—parodic poems, tragedies (Lucian's *Tragopodagra*

["Gout-Tragedy"], for example), parodic judicial speeches and so forth. This is a parody and travesty in the narrow sense of the word. In other cases we find special forms of parody constituted as genres—satyr-drama, improvised comedy, satire, plotless dialogue [*bessjužetnyj dialog*] and others. As we have said above, parodied genres do not belong to the genres that they parody; that is, a parodic poem is not a poem at all. But the particular genres of the parodic-travestying word of the sort we have enumerated here are unstable, compositionally still unshaped, lacking a firm or definite generic skeleton. It can be said, then, that in ancient times the parodic-travestying word was (generically speaking) homeless. All these diverse parodic-travestying forms constituted, as it were, a special extra-generic or inter-generic world. But this world was unified, first of all, by a common purpose: to provide the corrective of laughter and criticism to all existing straightforward genres, languages, styles, voices; to force men to experience beneath these categories a different and contradictory reality that is otherwise not captured in them. Such laughter paved the way for the impiety of the novelistic form. In the second place, all these forms are unified by virtue of their shared subject: language itself, which everywhere serves as a means of direct expression, becomes in this new context the image of language, the image of the direct word. Consequently this extra-generic or inter-generic world is internally unified and even appears as its own kind of totality. Each separate element in it—parodic dialogue, scenes from everyday life, bucolic humor, etc.—is presented as if it were a fragment of some kind of unified whole. I imagine this whole to be something like an immense novel, multi-generic, multi-styled, mercilessly critical, soberly mocking, reflecting in all its fullness the heteroglossia and multiple voices of a given culture, people and epoch. In this huge novel—in this mirror of constantly evolving heteroglossia—any direct word and especially that of the dominant discourse is reflected as something more or less bounded, typical and characteristic of a particular era, aging, dying, ripe for change and renewal. And in actual fact, out of this huge complex of parodically reflected words and voices the ground was being prepared in ancient times for the rise of the novel, a genre formed of many styles and many images. But the novel could not *at that time* gather unto itself and make use of all the material that language images had made available. I have in mind here the "Greek romance," and Apuleius and Petronius. The ancient world was apparently not capable of going further than these.

These parodic-travestying forms prepared the ground for the novel in one very important, in fact decisive, respect. They liberated the object from the power of language in which it had become entangled as if in a net; they destroyed the homogenizing power of myth over language; they freed consciousness from the power of the direct word, destroyed the thick walls that had imprisoned consciousness within its own discourse, within its own language. A distance arose between language and reality that was to prove an indispensable condition for authentically realistic forms of discourse.

Linguistic consciousness—parodying the direct word, direct style, exploring its limits, its absurd sides, the face specific to an era—constituted itself *outside* this direct word and outside all its graphic and expressive means of representation. A new mode developed for working creatively with language:

the creating artist began to look at language from the outside, with another's eyes, from the point of view of a potentially different language and style. It is, after all, precisely in the light of another potential language or style that a given straightforward style is parodied, travestied, ridiculed. The creating consciousness stands, as it were, on the boundary line between languages and styles. This is, for the creating consciousness, a highly peculiar position to find itself in with regard to language. The aedile or rhapsode experienced himself in his own language, in his own discourse, in an utterly different way from the creator of "War between the Mice and the Frogs," or the creators of *Margites*.[r]

One who creates a direct word—whether epic, tragic or lyric—deals only with the subject whose praises he sings, or represents, or expresses, and he does so in his own language that is perceived as the sole and fully adequate tool for realizing the word's direct, objectivized meaning. This meaning and the objects and themes that compose it are inseparable from the straightforward language of the person who creates it: the objects and themes are born and grow to maturity in this language, and in the national myth and national tradition that permeate this language. The position and tendency of the parodic-travestying consciousness is, however, completely different: it, too, is oriented toward the object—but toward another's word as well, a parodied word *about* the object that in the process becomes *itself* an image. Thus is created that distance between language and reality we mentioned earlier. Language is transformed from the absolute dogma it had been within the narrow framework of a sealed-off and impermeable monoglossia into a working hypothesis for comprehending and expressing reality.

But such a full and complete transformation can occur only under certain conditions, namely, under the condition of thoroughgoing *polyglossia*.

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Closely connected with the problem of polyglossia and inseparable from it is the problem of heteroglossia *within* a language, that is, the problem of internal differentiation, the stratification characteristic of any national language. This problem is of primary importance for understanding the style and historical destinies of the modern European novel, that is, the novel since the seventeenth century. This latecomer reflects, in its stylistic structure, the struggle between two tendencies in the languages of European peoples: one a centralizing (unifying) tendency, the other a decentralizing tendency (that is, one that stratifies languages). The novel senses itself on the border between the completed, dominant literary language and the extraliterary languages that know heteroglossia; the novel either serves to further the centralizing tendencies of a new literary language in the process of taking shape (with its grammatical, stylistic and ideological norms), or—on the contrary—the novel fights for the renovation of an antiquated literary language, in the interests of those strata of the national language that have remained (to a greater or lesser degree) outside the centralizing and unifying influence of the artistic and ideological norm established by the dominant literary language. The literary-artistic consciousness of the modern novel, sensing itself on the border between two languages, one literary, the other extraliterary, each of which now knows hetero-

glossia, also senses itself on the border of time: it is extraordinarily sensitive to time in language, it senses time's shifts, the aging and renewing of language, the past and the future—and all in language.

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Thus it is that in parody two languages are crossed with each other, as well as two styles, two linguistic points of view, and in the final analysis two speaking subjects. It is true that only one of these languages (the one that is parodied) is present in its own right; the other is present invisibly, as an actualizing background for creating and perceiving. Parody is an intentional hybrid, but usually it is an intra-linguistic one, one that nourishes itself on the stratification of the literary language into generic languages and languages of various specific tendencies.

Every type of intentional stylistic hybrid is more or less dialogized. This means that the languages that are crossed in it relate to each other as do rejoinders in a dialogue; there is an argument between languages, an argument between styles of language. But it is not a dialogue in the narrative sense, nor in the abstract sense; rather it is a dialogue between points of view, each with its own concrete language that cannot be translated into the other.

Thus every parody is an intentional dialogized hybrid. Within it, languages and styles actively and mutually illuminate one another.

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Discourse in the Novel

The principal idea of this essay is that the study of verbal art can and must overcome the divorce between an abstract "formal" approach and an equally abstract "ideological" approach. Form and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon—social throughout its entire range and in each and every one of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning.

It is this idea that has motivated our emphasis on "the stylistics of genre." The separation of style and language from the question of genre has been largely responsible for a situation in which only individual and period-bound overtones of a style are the privileged subjects of study, while its basic social tone is ignored. The great historical destinies of genres are overshadowed by the petty vicissitudes of stylistic modifications, which in their turn are linked with individual artists and artistic movements. For this reason, stylistics has been deprived of an authentic philosophical and sociological approach to its problems; it has become bogged down in stylistic trivia; it is not able to sense behind the individual and period-bound shifts the great and anonymous destinies of artistic discourse itself. More often than not, stylistics defines itself as a stylistics of "private craftsmanship" and ignores the social life of discourse outside the artist's study, discourse in the open spaces of public squares, streets, cities and villages, of social groups, generations and epochs. Stylistics is concerned not with living discourse but with a histological specimen made from it, with abstract linguistic discourse in the service of an artist's individual cre-

ative powers. But these individual and tendentious overtones of style, cut off from the fundamentally social modes in which discourse lives, inevitably come across as flat and abstract in such a formulation and cannot therefore be studied in organic unity with a work's semantic components.

Modern Stylistics and the Novel. Before the twentieth century, problems associated with a stylistics of the novel had not been precisely formulated—such a formulation could only have resulted from a recognition of the stylistic uniqueness of novelistic (artistic-prose) discourse.

For a long time treatment of the novel was limited to little more than abstract ideological examination and publicistic commentary. Concrete questions of stylistics were either not treated at all or treated in passing and in an arbitrary way: the discourse of artistic prose was either understood as being poetic in the narrow sense, and had the categories of traditional stylistics (based on the study of tropes) uncritically applied to it, or else such questions were limited to empty, evaluative terms for the characterization of language, such as "expressiveness," "imagery," "force," "clarity" and so on—without providing these concepts with any stylistic significance, however vague and tentative.

Toward the end of the last century, as a counterweight to this abstract ideological way of viewing things, interest began to grow in the concrete problems of artistic craftsmanship in prose, in the problems of novel and short-story technique. However, in questions of stylistics the situation did not change in the slightest; attention was concentrated almost exclusively on problems of composition (in the broad sense of the word). But, as before, the peculiarities of the stylistic life of discourse in the novel (and in the short story as well) lacked an approach that was both principled and at the same time concrete (one is impossible without the other); the same arbitrary judgmental observations about language—the spirit of traditional stylistics—continued to reign supreme, and they totally overlooked the authentic nature of artistic prose.

There is a highly characteristic and widespread point of view that sees novelistic discourse as an extra-artistic medium, a discourse that is not worked into any special or unique style. After failure to find in novelistic discourse a purely poetic formulation ("poetic" in the narrow sense) as was expected, prose discourse is denied any artistic value at all; it is the same as practical speech for everyday life, or speech for scientific purposes, an artistically neutral means of communication.[3]

Such a point of view frees one from the necessity of undertaking stylistic analyses of the novel; it in fact gets rid of the very problem of a stylistics of the novel, permitting one to limit oneself to purely thematic analyses of it.

It was, however, precisely in the 1920s that this situation changed: the novelistic prose word began to win a place for itself in stylistics. On the one hand there appeared a series of concrete stylistic analyses of novelistic prose; on the other hand, systematic attempts were made to recognize and define the stylistic uniqueness of artistic prose as distinct from poetry.

But it was precisely these concrete analyses and these attempts at a principled approach that made patently obvious the fact that all the categories of traditional stylistics—in fact the very concept of a *poetic* artistic discourse,

which lies at the heart of such categories—were not applicable to novelistic discourse. Novelistic discourse proved to be the acid test for this whole way of conceiving style, exposing the narrowness of this type of thinking and its inadequacy in all areas of discourse's artistic life.

All attempts at concrete stylistic analysis of novelistic prose either strayed into linguistic descriptions of the language of a given novelist or else limited themselves to those separate, isolated stylistic elements of the novel that were includable (or gave the appearance of being includable) in the traditional categories of stylistics. In both instances the stylistic whole of the novel and of novelistic discourse eluded the investigator.

The novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice. In it the investigator is confronted with several heterogeneous stylistic unities, often located on different linguistic levels and subject to different stylistic controls.

We list below the basic types of compositional-stylistic unities into which the novelistic whole usually breaks down:

1. Direct authorial literary-artistic narration (in all its diverse variants);
2. Stylization of the various forms of oral everyday narration (*skaz*);
3. Stylization of the various forms of semiliterary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary, etc.);
4. Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth);
5. The stylistically individualized speech of characters.

These heterogeneous stylistic unities, upon entering the novel, combine to form a structured artistic system, and are subordinated to the higher stylistic unity of the work as a whole, a unity that cannot be identified with any single one of the unities subordinated to it.

The stylistic uniqueness of the novel as a genre consists precisely in the combination of these subordinated, yet still relatively autonomous, unities (even at times comprised of different languages) into the higher unity of the work as a whole: the style of a novel is to be found in the combination of its styles; the language of a novel is the system of its "languages." Each separate element of a novel's language is determined first of all by one such subordinated stylistic unity into which it enters directly—be it the stylistically individualized speech of a character, the down-to-earth voice of a narrator in *skaz,* a letter or whatever. The linguistic and stylistic profile of a given element (lexical, semantic, syntactic) is shaped by that subordinated unity to which it is most immediately proximate. At the same time this element, together with its most immediate unity, figures into the style of the whole, itself supports the accent of the whole and participates in the process whereby the unified meaning of the whole is structured and revealed.

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic lan-

guages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases)—this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre. The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types [*raznorečie*] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia [*raznorečie*] can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). These distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization—this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel.

Such a combining of languages and styles into a higher unity is unknown to traditional stylistics; it has no method for approaching the distinctive social dialogue among languages that is present in the novel. Thus stylistic analysis is not oriented toward the novel as a whole, but only toward one or another of its subordinated stylistic unities. The traditional scholar bypasses the basic distinctive feature of the novel as a genre; he substitutes for it another object of study, and instead of novelistic style he actually analyzes something completely different. He transposes a symphonic (orchestrated) theme onto the piano keyboard.

We notice two such types of substitutions: in the first type, an analysis of novelistic style is replaced by a description of the language of a given novelist (or at best of the "languages" of a given novel); in the second type, one of the subordinated styles is isolated and analyzed as if it were the style of the whole.

In the first type, style is cut off from considerations of genre, and from the work as such, and regarded as a phenomenon of language itself: the unity of style in a given work is transformed either into the unity of an individual language ("individual dialect"), or into the unity of an individual speech (*parole*). It is precisely the individuality of the speaking subject that is recognized to be that style-generating factor transforming a phenomenon of language and linguistics into a stylistic unity.

We have no need to follow where such an analysis of novelistic style leads, whether to a disclosing of the novelist's individual dialect (that is, his vocabulary, his syntax) or to a disclosing of the distinctive features of the work taken as a "complete speech act," an "utterance." Equally in both cases, style is understood in the spirit of Saussure: as an individualization of the general language (in the sense of a system of general language norms). Stylistics is transformed either into a curious kind of linguistics treating individual languages, or into a linguistics of the utterance.

In accordance with the point of view selected, the unity of a style thus

presupposes on the one hand a unity of language (in the sense of a system of general normative forms) and on the other hand the unity of an individual person realizing himself in this language.

Both these conditions are in fact obligatory in the majority of verse-based poetic genres, but even in these genres they far from exhaust or define the style of the work. The most precise and complete description of the individual language and speech of a poet—even if this description does choose to treat the expressiveness of language and speech elements—does not add up to a stylistic analysis of the work, inasmuch as these elements relate to a system of language or to a system of speech, that is, to various linguistic unities and not to the system of the artistic work, which is governed by a completely different system of rules than those that govern the linguistic systems of language and of speech.

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The novel is an artistic genre. Novelistic discourse is poetic discourse, but one that does not fit within the frame provided by the concept of poetic discourse as it now exists. This concept has certain underlying presuppositions that limit it. The very concept—in the course of its historical formulation from Aristotle to the present day—has been oriented toward the specific "official" genres and connected with specific historical tendencies in verbal ideological life. Thus a whole series of phenomena remained beyond its conceptual horizon.

Philosophy of language, linguistics and stylistics [i.e., such as they have come down to us] have all postulated a simple and unmediated relation of speaker to his unitary and singular "own" language, and have postulated as well a simple realization of this language in the monologic utterance of the individual. Such disciplines actually know only two poles in the life of language, between which are located all the linguistic and stylistic phenomena they know: on the one hand, the system of a *unitary language,* and on the other the *individual* speaking in this language.

Various schools of thought in the philosophy of language, in linguistics and in stylistics have, in different periods (and always in close connection with the diverse concrete poetic and ideological styles of a given epoch), introduced into such concepts as "system of language," "monologic utterance," "the speaking *individuum,*" various differing nuances of meaning, but their basic content remains unchanged. This basic content is conditioned by the specific socio-historical destinies of European languages and by the destinies of ideological discourse, and by those particular historical tasks that ideological discourse has fulfilled in specific social spheres and at specific stages in its own historical development.

These tasks and destinies of discourse conditioned specific verbal-ideological movements, as well as various specific genres of ideological discourse, and ultimately the specific philosophical concept of discourse itself—in particular, the concept of poetic discourse, which had been at the heart of all concepts of style.

The strength and at the same time the limitations of such basic stylistic categories become apparent when such categories are seen as conditioned by

specific historical destinies and by the task that an ideological discourse assumes. These categories arose from and were shaped by the historically *aktuell* forces at work in the verbal-ideological evolution of specific social groups; they comprised the theoretical expression of actualizing forces that were in the process of creating a life for language.

These forces are *the forces that serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world.*

Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language. A unitary language is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence posited [*zadan*]—and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystallizing into a real, although still relative, unity—the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, "correct language."

A common unitary language is a system of linguistic norms. But these norms do not constitute an abstract imperative; they are rather the generative forces of linguistic life, forces that struggle to overcome the heteroglossia of language, forces that unite and centralize verbal-ideological thought, creating within a heteroglot national language the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language, or else defending an already formed language from the pressure of growing heteroglossia.

What we have in mind here is not an abstract linguistic minimum of a common language, in the sense of a system of elementary forms (linguistic symbols) guaranteeing a *minimum* level of comprehension in practical communication. We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life. Thus a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization.

Aristotelian poetics, the poetics of Augustine, the poetics of the medieval church, of "the one language of truth," the Cartesian poetics of neoclassicism, the abstract grammatical universalism of Leibniz (the idea of a "universal grammar"), Humboldt's insistence on the concrete—all these, whatever their differences in nuance, give expression to the same centripetal forces in sociolinguistic and ideological life; they serve one and the same project of centralizing and unifying the European languages. The victory of one reigning language (dialect) over the others, the supplanting of languages, their enslavement, the process of illuminating them with the True Word, the incorporation of barbarians and lower social strata into a unitary language of culture and truth, the canonization of ideological systems, philology with its methods of studying and teaching dead languages, languages that were by that very fact "unities," Indo-European linguistics with its focus of attention, directed away from language plurality to a single proto-language—all this determined the

content and power of the category of "unitary language" in linguistic and stylistic thought, and determined its creative, style-shaping role in the majority of the poetic genres that coalesced in the channel formed by those same centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life.

But the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a "unitary language," operate in the midst of heteroglossia. At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also—and for us this is the essential point—into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional" and "generic" languages, languages of generations and so forth. From this point of view, literary language itself is only one of these heteroglot languages—and in its turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound and others). And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing. Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward.

Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance; the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity. And this active participation of every utterance in living heteroglossia determines the linguistic profile and style of the utterance to no less a degree than its inclusion in any normative-centralizing system of a unitary language.

Every utterance participates in the "unitary language" (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces).

Such is the fleeting language of a day, of an epoch, a social group, a genre, a school and so forth. It is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language.

The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance.

At the time when major divisions of the poetic genres were developing under the influence of the unifying, centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life, the novel—and those artistic-prose genres that gravitate toward it—was being historically shaped by the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces. At the time when poetry was accomplishing the task of cultural, national and political centralization of the verbal-ideological world in the higher official socio-ideological levels, on the lower levels, on the stages

of local fairs and at buffoon spectacles, the heteroglossia of the clown sounded forth, ridiculing all "languages" and dialects; there developed the literature of the *fabliaux* and *Schwänke* of street songs, folksayings, anecdotes, where there was no language-center at all, where there was to be found a lively play with the "languages" of poets, scholars, monks, knights and others, where all "languages" were masks and where no language could claim to be an authentic, incontestable face.

Heteroglossia, as organized in these low genres, was not merely heteroglossia vis-à-vis the accepted literary language (in all its various generic expressions), that is, vis-à-vis the linguistic center of the verbal-ideological life of the nation and the epoch, but was a heteroglossia consciously opposed to this literary language. It was parodic, and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its given time. It was heteroglossia that had been dialogized.

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The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it—it does not approach the object from the sidelines.

The way in which the word conceptualizes its object is a complex act—all objects, open to dispute and overlain as they are with qualifications, are from one side highlighted while from the other side dimmed by heteroglot social opinion, by an alien word about them.[4] And into this complex play of light and shadow the word enters—it becomes saturated with this play, and must determine within it the boundaries of its own semantic and stylistic contours. The way in which the word conceives its object is complicated by a dialogic interaction within the object between various aspects of its socio-verbal intelligibility. And an artistic representation, an "image" of the object, may be penetrated by this dialogic play of verbal intentions that meet and are interwoven in it; such an image need not stifle these forces, but on the contrary may activate and organize them. If we imagine the *intention* of such a word, that is, its *directionality toward the object,* in the form of a ray of light, then the living and unrepeatable play of colors and light on the facets of the image that it constructs can be explained as the spectral dispersion of the ray-word, not within the object itself (as would be the case in the play of an image-as-trope, in poetic speech taken in the narrow sense, in an "autotelic word"), but rather as its spectral dispersion in an atmosphere filled with the alien words, value judgments and accents through which the ray passes on its way toward the object; the social atmosphere of the word, the atmosphere that surrounds the object, makes the facets of the image sparkle.

The word, breaking through to its own meaning and its own expression across an environment full of alien words and variously evaluating accents, harmonizing with some of the elements in this environment and striking a

dissonance with others, is able, in this dialogized process, to shape its own stylistic profile and tone.

Such is the *image in artistic prose* and the image of *novelistic prose* in particular. In the atmosphere of the novel, the direct and unmediated intention of a word presents itself as something impermissably naïve, something in fact impossible, for naïveté itself, under authentic novelistic conditions, takes on the nature of an internal polemic and is consequently dialogized (in, for example, the work of the Sentimentalists, in Chateaubriand and in Tolstoy). Such a dialogized image can occur in all the poetic genres as well, even in the lyric (to be sure, without setting the tone).[5] But such an image can fully unfold, achieve full complexity and depth and at the same time artistic closure, only under the conditions present in the genre of the novel.

In the poetic image narrowly conceived (in the image-as-trope), all activity—the dynamics of the image-as-word—is completely exhausted by the play between the word (with all its aspects) and the object (in all its aspects). The word plunges into the inexhaustible wealth and contradictory multiplicity of the object itself, with its "virginal," still "unuttered" nature; therefore it presumes nothing beyond the borders of its own context (except, of course, what can be found in the treasure-house of language itself). The word forgets that its object has its own history of contradictory acts of verbal recognition, as well as that heteroglossia that is always present in such acts of recognition.

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The world of poetry, no matter how many contradictions and insoluble conflicts the poet develops within it, is always illumined by one unitary and indisputable discourse. Contradictions, conflicts and doubts remain in the object, in thoughts, in living experiences—in short, in the subject matter—but they do not enter into the language itself. In poetry, even discourse about doubts must be cast in a discourse that cannot be doubted.

To take responsibility for the language of the work as a whole at all of its points as *its* language, to assume a full solidarity with each of the work's aspects, tones, nuances—such is the fundamental prerequisite for poetic style; style so conceived is fully adequate to a single language and a single linguistic consciousness. The poet is not able to oppose his own poetic consciousness, his own intentions to the language that he uses, for he is completely within it and therefore cannot turn it into an object to be perceived, reflected upon or related to. Language is present to him only from inside, in the work it does to effect its intention, and not from outside, in its objective specificity and boundedness. Within the limits of poetic style, direct unconditional intentionality, language at its full weight and the objective display of language (as a socially and historically limited linguistic reality) are all simultaneous, but incompatible. The unity and singularity of language are the indispensable prerequisites for a realization of the direct (but not objectively typifying) intentional individuality of poetic style and of its monologic steadfastness.

This does not mean, of course, that heteroglossia or even a foreign language is completely shut out of a poetic work. To be sure, such possibilities are limited: a certain latitude for heteroglossia exists only in the "low" poetic

genres—in the satiric and comic genres and others. Nevertheless, heteroglossia (other socio-ideological languages) can be introduced into purely poetic genres, primarily in the speeches of characters. But in such a context it is objective. It appears, in essence, as a *thing,* it does not lie on the *same* plane with the real language of the work: it is the depicted gesture of one of the characters and does not appear as an aspect of the word doing the depicting. Elements of heteroglossia enter here not in the capacity of another language carrying its own particular points of view, about which one can say things not expressible in one's own language, but rather in the capacity of a depicted thing. Even when speaking of alien things, the poet speaks in his own language. To shed light on an alien world, he never resorts to an alien language, even though it might in fact be more adequate to that world. Whereas the writer of prose, by contrast—as we shall see—attempts to talk about even his *own* world in an alien language (for example, in the nonliterary language of the teller of tales, or the representative of a specific socio-ideological group); he often measures his own world by alien linguistic standards.

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In any given historical moment of verbal-ideological life, each generation at each social level has its own language; moreover, every age group has as a matter of fact its own language, its own vocabulary, its own particular accentual system that, in their turn, vary depending on social level, academic institution (the language of the cadet, the high school student, the trade school student are all different languages) and other stratifying factors. All this is brought about by socially typifying languages, no matter how narrow the social circle in which they are spoken. It is even possible to have a family jargon define the societal limits of a language, as, for instance, the jargon of the Irtenevs in Tolstoy, with its special vocabulary and unique accentual system.

And finally, at any given moment, languages of various epochs and periods of socio-ideological life cohabit with one another. Even languages of the day exist: one could say that today's and yesterday's socio-ideological and political "day" do not, in a certain sense, share the same language; every day represents another socio-ideological semantic "state of affairs," another vocabulary, another accentual system, with its own slogans, its own ways of assigning blame and praise. Poetry depersonalizes "days" in language, while prose, as we shall see, often deliberately intensifies difference between them, gives them embodied representation and dialogically opposes them to one another in unresolvable dialogues.

Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These "languages" of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying "languages."

Each of these "languages" of heteroglossia requires a methodology very different from the others; each is grounded in a completely different principle

for marking differences and for establishing units (for some this principle is functional, in others it is the principle of theme and content, in yet others it is, properly speaking, a socio-dialectological principle). Therefore languages do not *exclude* each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways (the Ukrainian language, the language of the epic poem, of early Symbolism, of the student, of a particular generation of children, of the run-of-the-mill intellectual, of the Nietzschean and so on). It might even seem that the very word "language" loses all meaning in this process—for apparently there is no single plane on which all these "languages" might be juxtaposed to one another.

In actual fact, however, there does exist a common plane that methodologically justifies our juxtaposing them: all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people—first and foremost, in the creative consciousness of people who write novels. As such, these languages live a real life, they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia. Therefore they are all able to enter into the unitary plane of the novel, which can unite in itself parodic stylizations of generic languages, various forms of stylizations and illustrations of professional and period-bound languages, the languages of particular generations, of social dialects and others (as occurs, for example, in the English comic novel). They may all be drawn in by the novelist for the orchestration of his themes and for the refracted (indirect) expression of his intentions and values.

This is why we constantly put forward the referential and expressive—that is, intentional—factors as the force that stratifies and differentiates the common literary language, and not the linguistic markers (lexical coloration, semantic overtones, etc.) of generic languages, professional jargons and so forth—markers that are, so to speak, the sclerotic deposits of an intentional process, signs left behind on the path of the real living project of an intention, of the particular way it imparts meaning to general linguistic norms. These external markers, linguistically observable and fixable, cannot in themselves be understood or studied without understanding the specific conceptualization they have been given by an intention.

Discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse [*napravlennost'*] toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life. *To study the word as such, ignoring the impulse that reaches out beyond it, is just as senseless as to study psychological experience outside the context of that real life toward which it was directed and by which it is determined.*

By stressing the intentional dimension of stratification in literary language, we are able, as has been said, to locate in a single series such method-

ologically heterogeneous phenomena as professional and social dialects, world views and individual artistic works, for in their intentional dimension one finds that common plane on which they can all be juxtaposed, and juxtaposed dialogically. The whole matter consists in the fact that there may be, between "languages," highly specific dialogic relations; no matter how these languages are conceived, they may all be taken as particular points of view on the world. However varied the social forces doing the work of stratification—a profession, a genre, a particular tendency, an individual personality—the work itself everywhere comes down to the (relatively) protracted and socially meaningful (collective) saturation of language with specific (and consequently limiting) intentions and accents. The longer this stratifying saturation goes on, the broader the social circle encompassed by it and consequently the more substantial the social force bringing about such a stratification of language, then the more sharply focused and stable will be those traces, the linguistic changes in the language markers (linguistic symbols), that are left behind in language as a result of this social force's activity—from stable (and consequently social) semantic nuances to authentic dialectological markers (phonetic, morphological and others), which permit us to speak of particular social dialects.

As a result of the work done by all these stratifying forces in language, there are no "neutral" words and forms—words and forms that can belong to "no one"; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents. For any individual consciousness living in it, language is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world. All words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word.

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is

populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.

We have so far proceeded on the assumption of the abstract-linguistic (dialectological) unity of literary language. But even a literary language is anything but a closed dialect. Within the scope of literary language itself there is already a more or less sharply defined boundary between everyday-conversational language and written language. Distinctions between genres frequently coincide with dialectological distinctions (for example, the high—Church Slavonic—and the low—conversational—genres of the eighteenth century); finally, certain dialects may be legitimized in literature and thus to a certain extent be appropriated by literary language.

As they enter literature and are appropriated to literary language, dialects in this new context lose, of course, the quality of closed socio-linguistic systems; they are deformed and in fact cease to be that which they had been simply as dialects. On the other hand, these dialects, on entering the literary language and preserving within it their own dialectological elasticity, their other-languagedness, have the effect of deforming the literary language; it, too, ceases to be that which it had been, a closed socio-linguistic system. Literary language is a highly distinctive phenomenon, as is the linguistic consciousness of the educated person who is its agent; within it, intentional diversity of speech [*raznorečivost'*] (which is present in every living dialect as a closed system) is transformed into diversity of language [*raznojazyčie*]; what results is not a single language but a dialogue of languages.

The national literary language of a people with a highly developed art of prose, especially if it is novelistic prose with a rich and tension-filled verbal-ideological history, is in fact an organized microcosm that reflects the macrocosm not only of national heteroglossia, but of European heteroglossia as well. The unity of a literary language is not a unity of a single, closed language system, but is rather a highly specific unity of several "languages" that have established contact and mutual recognition with each other (merely one of which is poetic language in the narrow sense). Precisely this constitutes the peculiar nature of the methodological problem in literary language.

Concrete socio-ideological language consciousness, as it becomes creative—that is, as it becomes active as literature—discovers itself already surrounded by heteroglossia and not at all a single, unitary language, inviolable and indisputable. The actively literary linguistic consciousness at all times and everywhere (that is, in all epochs of literature historically available to us) comes upon "languages," and not language. Consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of *having to choose a language.* With each literary-verbal performance, consciousness must actively orient itself amidst heteroglossia, it must move in and occupy a position for itself within it, it chooses, in other words, a "language." Only by remaining in a closed environment, one without writing or thought, completely off the maps of socio-ideological becoming, could a man fail to sense this activity of selecting a language and rest assured in the inviolability of his own language, the conviction that his language is predetermined.

Even such a man, however, deals not in fact with a single language, but with languages—except that the place occupied by each of these languages is fixed and indisputable, the movement from one to the other is predetermined and not a thought process; it is as if these languages were in different chambers. They do not collide with each other in his consciousness, there is no attempt to coordinate them, to look at one of these languages through the eyes of another language.

Thus an illiterate peasant, miles away from any urban center, naïvely immersed in an unmoving and for him unshakable everyday world, nevertheless lived in several language systems: he prayed to God in one language (Church Slavonic), sang songs in another, spoke to his family in a third and, when he began to dictate petitions to the local authorities through a scribe, he tried speaking yet a fourth language (the official-literate language, "paper" language). All these are *different languages,* even from the point of view of abstract socio-dialectological markers. But these languages were not dialogically coordinated in the linguistic consciousness of the peasant; he passed from one to the other without thinking, automatically: each was indisputably in its own place, and the place of each was indisputable. He was not yet able to regard one language (and the verbal world corresponding to it) through the eyes of another language (that is, the language of everyday life and the everyday world with the language of prayer or song, or vice versa).[6]

As soon as a critical interanimation of languages began to occur in the consciousness of our peasant, as soon as it became clear that these were not only various different languages but even internally variegated languages, that the ideological systems and approaches to the world that were indissolubly connected with these languages contradicted each other and in no way could live in peace and quiet with one another—then the inviolability and predetermined quality of these languages came to an end, and the necessity of actively choosing one's orientation among them began.

Notes

1. See "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," below.

2. Cf. A. Dieterich, *Pulcinella: Pompeyanische Wandbilder und römische Satyrspiele* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 131.

3. As recently as the 1920s, V. M. Žirmunskij [important fellow-traveler of the Formalists, ed.] was writing: "When lyrical poetry appears to be authentically a work of *verbal art,* due to its choice and combination of words (on semantic as well as sound levels) all of which are completely subordinated to the aesthetic project, Tolstoy's novel, by contrast, which is free in its verbal composition, does not use words as an artistically significant element of interaction but as a neutral medium or as a system of significations subordinated (as happens in practical speech) to the communicative function, directing our attention to thematic aspects quite abstracted from purely verbal considerations. We cannot call such a *literary work* a work of *verbal art* or, in any case, not in the sense that the term is used for lyrical poetry." "On the Problem of the Formal Method," in an anthology of his articles, *Problems of a Theory of Literature* (Leningrad, 1928, p. 173); Russian ed.: "K voprosu o 'formal'nom metode'," in *Voprosy teorii literatury* (L[eningrad], 1928).

4. Highly significant in this respect is the struggle that must be undertaken in

such movements as Rousseauism, Naturalism, Impressionism, Acmeism, Dadaism, Surrealism and analogous schools with the "qualified" nature of the object (a struggle occasioned by the idea of a return to primordial consciousness, to original consciousness, to the object itself in itself, to pure perception and so forth).

5. The Horatian lyric, Villon, Heine, Laforgue, Annenskij and others—despite the fact that these are extremely varied instances.

6. We are of course deliberately simplifying: the real-life peasant could and did do this to a certain extent.

a. Erwin Rohde (1845–98), *Der Griechesche Roman und seine Vorläufer* (1876, but many later eds., most recently that published by F. Olds [Hildesheim, 1960]), one of the greatest monuments of nineteenth-century classical scholarship in Germany. It has never really ever been superseded. But see: Ben F. Perry, *The Ancient Romances* (Berkeley, 1967) and Arthur Heiserman, *The Novel before the Novel* (Chicago, 1977).

b. Charles Sorel (1599–1674), an important figure in the reaction to the *preciosité* of such figures as Honoré d'Urfé (1567–1625), whose *L'Astrée* (1607–27), a monstrous 5,500-page volume overflowing with highflown language, is parodied in *Le Berger extravagant* (1627). The latter book's major protagonist is a dyed-in-the-wool Parisian who reads too many pastoral novels; intoxicated by these, he attempts to live the rustic life as they describe it—with predictably comic results.

c. Johann Karl August Musäus (1735–87), along with Tieck and Brentano, one of the great collectors of German folktales and author of several *Kunstmärchen* of his own (trans. into English by Carlyle). Reference here is to his *Grandison der Zweite* (1760–62, rewritten as *Der deutsche Grandison,* 1781–82), a satire on Richardson.

d. Sophron (fl. 5th century B.C.) was probably the first writer to give literary form to the mime. He was greatly admired by Plato. The mimes were written in rhythmic prose and took as their subject matter events of everyday life.

e. Ion of Chios (490–421 B.C.), a Greek poet who, when he won first for tragedy in the Great Dionysia, made a present of Chian wine to every Athenian. His memoirs have not come down to us, but Athenaeus gives long quotes, including the description of an evening Sophocles spent with him in his home on Chios. It has been said no other Greek before Socrates has been presented so vividly. The title of these *Epidēmiai* probably refers to the visits of distinguished Athenians who came to see Ion on Chios.

f. Critias (460–403 B.C.), one of the Thirty Tyrants, also active as a writer. He wrote mostly elegies and tragedies. Fragments of *Homilai* ("discussions") have come down to us; Galen is cited by the editors of the Pauly-Wissowa (vol. 11 of the 1910 ed., p. 1910) as calling the two books of the original *Homilai* "aimless discussions" (*zwanglose Unterhaltungen*).

g. Lucilius Gaius (?–102 B.C.), member of one of the greatest Roman families, author of several important satires, chiefly remarkable for the personal, almost autobiographical tone he introduces into them.

h. Persius, Flaccus Aulus (A.D. 34–62), satirist heavily influenced by Stoic philosophy.

i. Abbé Huet (1630–1721), bishop of Avranches, learned scholar who wrote numerous works on a wide variety of subjects. His *Traité de l'origine des romans* (1670) was first published as an introduction to Mme. de La Fayette's *Zaïde,* a novel written while its author was still influenced by ideas of the *précieux* society.

j. Xenophon (428–354 B.C.), *Cyropaedia,* a text that haunts the history of thinking about novels from Julian the Apostate's citation of it as a model to be avoided (cf. Perry, *Ancient Romances,* p. 78) to Boileau, who, in his *Dialogue sur les héros des romans* (1664) attacks Mme. de Scudéry's monstrous *Artamène, ou le grand Cyrus* (1649–53).

k. The exodium was, in Greek drama, the end or catastrophe of a play, but is used here by Bakhtin as it applied in Roman plays, where the word means a comic interlude or farce following something more serious. Its function is comparable with the satyr play in Athenian tetralogies. (Not to be confused with *exodos,* the portion near the end of Greek plays where the chorus leaves the stage.)

l. First-century B.C. farces that emphasized crude physiological details and bawdy jokes.

m. Lucius Pomponius of Bonomia (fl. 100–85 B.C.), author of at least seventy Atellan farces.

n. Novius (fl. 95–80 B.C.), younger contemporary of Pomponius, and author of forty-three farces.

o. Lucius Accius (170–90 B.C.), historian of literature, but cited here by Bakhtin because he was generally regarded as the last real tragedian of Rome.

p. Phallophors, "phallus bearers," the figures who carried carved *phalloi* in religious processions and whose role was to joke and cavort obscenely.

q. Deikelists, from the Greek *deikeliktas,* simply "one who represents," but according to Athenaeus, in bk. 14 of the *Deipnosophistai,* they were actors who specialized in burlesque parts.

r. An early satirical epic, traditionally ascribed to Homer, but to Pigres as well.

Part Seven

Revisionist Grand Theory

The theory of the novel finds its foundation in the writings of Lukács, Ortega y Gasset, and Bakhtin, whose basic compatibility is complicated and enriched by differences in philosophical orientation and national culture. The writers who comprise this part are "revisionist" not in any explicit or programmatic sense of the term, but rather in the loose sense of working within—and beyond—the body of thought for which the grand theorists are most generally responsible.

Read alongside the grand theorists, Ian Watt, the most familiar and influential novel critic in the Anglo-American tradition, undergoes a degree of illuminating estrangement. Like his predecessors, Watt situates the emergence of the novel within the context of a chronology articulated into two periods by a "larger change—that vast transformation of Western civilization since the Renaissance which has replaced the unified world picture of the Middle Ages with another very different one . . . ,[an] aggregate of particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places." Recalling Lukács on the dominance of ethics and biography in the novel, Watt argues that the modern conviction of "the primacy of individual experience" makes "the pattern of the autobiographical memoir" fundamental to novelistic narration. Recalling Bakhtin, Watt stresses the way novelistic realism depends on a self-conscious "skepticism about language," about the fact that "[w]ords d[o] not all stand for real objects, or d[o] not stand for them in the same way." In his well-known emphasis on the importance of viewing the novelistic version of the real as a "formal realism," for which the "how" of description or presentation takes precedence over the "what" of narration, Watt may remind us most of all of Ortega: "The novel's realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it. . . . [F]ormal realism . . . does not here refer to any special literary doctrine or purpose, but only to a set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel, and so rarely in other literary genres, that they may be regarded as typical of the form itself."

Yet despite Watt's apparent concurrence with the terms of his predecessors, there are important divergences from them. The plot of the novel is "acted out by particular people in particular circumstances, rather than, as had been common in the past, by general human types." Literary tradition was concerned not with "the correspondence of words to things" but with "lan-

guage as a source of interest in its own right, rather than as a purely referential medium." By contrast, "the function of language is much more largely referential in the novel than in other literary forms." Thus Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson aim at an "immediacy and closeness of the text to what is being described." This is, indeed, the sum and hallmark of formal realism, which "allows a more immediate imitation of individual experience set in its temporal and spatial environment than do other literary forms." And yet for Ortega, realism is formal not simply because it's not a matter of content, but because it's a process of thematizing form, of making the fact of formality explicit by transforming it into content. Watt's argument brings the novelistic aim of empirical objectivity to the forefront, but at the expense of the self-conscious reflexivity that his predecessors treat as an equal and obverse effect of the novel's epistemological distance. So when Watt employs the domestic metaphor made famous by Lukács, he figures not the novel's search for, but its attainment of, "home": the novelist's "exclusive aim is to make the words bring his object home to us in all its concrete particularity."

Lukács, Ortega, and Bakhtin associate novelistic realism with distance and mediation because they see it as a dialectical amalgam of empirical objectivity and self-conscious reflexivity. Watt associates realism with (the effect of) immediate presence; and for this reason he questions Henry Fielding's achievement as a novelist. To write like Fielding is to risk "destroying the reader's belief in the literal reality of the character concerned." For the grand theorists, it is just this oscillation between belief and its destruction (thus Ortega's account of Don Quixote at the puppet show) that defines novelistic realism and that is achieved by the self-conscious thematization of form. For Watt—and despite formal realism's concern with the "how" of presentation, not the "what" of narration—Fielding stumbles as a novelist because he "diverts our attention from the content of the report to the skill of the reporter." In his insistence that realism is a matter of form, not content, Watt precludes the view of form as a reflexive technique of thematization, as a determinant *of* content. One result of this divorce of form from content is the unexpected proximity of Watt and Frye. In Frye, novelistic realism obscures formal conventions; in Watt it "impoverishes" them. In Frye, novelistic parody is uncritically imitative of romance; in Watt, it unknowingly reiterates romance on the level of content.[1]

In undertaking to rethink Watt's argument, Michael McKeon also aims to historicize (at least for English narrative) the broad trajectory outlined by

1. See Watt's comments on Richardson's *Pamela,* below, ch. 18. In the penultimate chapter of *The Rise of the Novel,* Watt goes some distance toward overcoming the partiality of his focus on empirical objectivity to the exclusion of self-conscious reflexivity. The "realism of presentation" evident in Richardson is balanced by Fielding's "realism of assessment," which mitigates the tendency in formal realism whereby we become "wholly immersed in the reality of the characters and their actions." Unlike formal realism, however, realism of assessment is not so much a matter of form—a "narrative technique"—as it is an expansive worldly wisdom, and it fails to become "a permanent element in the tradition of the novel" (a judgment seemingly belied by Watt's view of Jane Austen as central to that tradition for her combination of the two realisms).

the grand theorists. The traditionality of romance (if not of myth and epic) is seen as explicit in, and crucial to, the formation of the novel. The transition to modernity is specified in terms of the scientific revolution, the Protestant Reformation, and the emergence of print culture.[2] These roughly synchronous developments engender a condition of "categorial instability" according to which traditional epistemological and social categories are conceived by contemporaries with a self-conscious detachment whose consequences are far-reaching.

One important marker of this detachment is parody, construed here as encompassing the entire continuum from imitation to criticism: "[T]he very capacity of seventeenth-century narrative to model itself so self-consciously on established categories bespeaks a detachment sufficient to imagine them *as* categories, to parody and thence to supersede them." And yet the character of the superseded category "still saturates, as an antithetical but constitutive force, the texture of the category by which it is in the process of being replaced." Fielding's parody of Richardson is therefore contributory, rather than resistant, to novelistic discourse; moreover Richardson's oblique approach to romance is as parodic of it as *Shamela* is of *Pamela.* Thus McKeon's reading brings a close period focus to the thesis, common to the grand theorists, that the novel represents and expresses a psychological, perspectival, and linguistic division of knowledge central to the emergence of modernity.

The argument distinguishes between two, respectively epistemological and social, categories of experience: questions of truth and questions of virtue. With the novel, the tacit coherence of traditional narrative separates out into the problematic relation of "romance" and "history," whereas the tacit coherence of traditional social description divides into the problematic relation of "status" to "class." Questions of truth are complicated by the valorization of both empirical objectivity ("naïve empiricism") and self-conscious reflexivity ("extreme skepticism"). Questions of virtue, destabilized by the crisis of "status inconsistency," are similarly propounded through the complicating coexistence of "progressive" and "conservative" ideologies. The ideological function of the novel genre, McKeon suggests, lies in its capacity not so much to "solve" these problems as to demonstrate their analogous co-implication.[3] The novel emerges as a recognizable genre in the elaboration of questions of truth and questions of virtue, of form and content, as versions of each other: form-as-content. But "realism," the reflexive correlation of form and content, congeals as technique only once the naïve "claim to historicity" has lost its appeal and been replaced by the claim to being history-like.

Fredric Jameson pursues the legacy of the grand theorists rather differently than Watt and McKeon. Instead of historicizing the emergence of the novel genre in particular, he works more broadly to historicize the ongoingness

2. For a fuller historicization see McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); on pp. 28–39 and 134–50, the transition to modernity is compared to two "precursor revolutions," the Greek Enlightenment and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance. On print culture and the novel see Benjamin, "Storyteller," Lévi-Strauss, *Origin,* above, ch. 6, 7.

3. On the ideological function of the novel see above, headnotes to pts. 2, 3.

of generic identity as such, taking romance as his test case. In this inquiry Jameson finds especially useful the structuralist and psychoanalytic conception of the history of narrative as a series of displacements from semantically more pristine forms. What attracts him to this conception is its insistence on a strong thread of continuity; what invites revision is its tendency to reduce all apparent discontinuity to a monolithic meaning.

The psychoanalytic reduction of variable conscious (or manifest) contents to an invariable unconscious (or latent) content—exemplified by Freudian interpretations of the family romance—provides Jameson's model for this procedure.[4] His aim is to revise it in two directions. First, by shifting attention from "old-fashioned" questions of meaning to more current questions of function, Jameson would correct the imbalance between the individual significations of difference and the universal significance of sameness. The key to apparent discontinuity becomes not simply continuity, but the way the former inhabits or employs the latter to particular ends. Second, by superimposing this (revised) psychoanalytic model onto the "political" or Marxist method of interpretation, Jameson would disclose the fully dialectical nature of that method, its ability to sustain discontinuity in continuity—superstructure in infrastructure, diachrony in synchrony. In the idea of the "political unconscious" Jameson posits a continuous discontinuity, the overarching form of history itself as inseparably collective and individual, "the specificity of the political content of everyday life and of individual fantasy-experience."

Focusing his attention on the category "romance," Jameson proceeds to investigate "the dialectical use of generic literary history" by positing at the outset "two seemingly incompatible tendencies at work" today that become compatible through "historicization." On the one hand is the "semantic" approach to genre, which seeks what a text means and thereby treats genre as a "mode"; on the other hand is the "syntactic" or "structural" approach, which asks how a text works and thereby treats genre as a "fixed form." These correspond to the dichotomously distinct categories of Saussurean linguistics, *parole* and *langue.* Northrop Frye represents the former approach to genre, Vladimir Propp the latter.[5]

With the foreknowledge that Jameson's argument works toward the rapprochement of the semantic and the syntactic approaches to genre, it has seemed justified to exclude from the following selection his historicization of Propp's approach to romance. With respect to Frye's, Jameson shows that what the semantic approach treats as the transhistorical ethical meaning of romance is (also) an "ideologeme that articulates a social and historical contradiction" whose "imaginary resolution" is achieved through that articulation.

4. On these see above, pt. 3. Jameson briefly exploits the psychoanalytic theory of development to contrast romance not with the novel but with comedy.

5. On *parole* and *langue* see above, pt. 6, where Bakhtin similarly argues the dialectical supersession of this dichotomy. Although Jameson's treatment of terms like "genre," "mode," and "structure" (not to mention the counterintuitive working hypothesis of Frye as a "semantic" anti-structuralist) differs markedly from the usage developed above, in pts. 1 and 2, the two arguments should be sufficiently intelligible to each other (but note the degree to which theorists like Guillén refute Jameson's dichotomizing view of "contemporary genre criticism").

Acknowledging now that Frye's deployment of Freudian "displacement" implies historical discontinuity as much as it does continuity, Jameson also pursues the idea, implicit in his historicizing method, that the imaginary resolution of real contradiction achieved by romance "in its original strong form" in twelfth-century France will vary according to historical context.

Like Lévi-Strauss,[6] Jameson tempers the devolutionary turn of displacement with the figure of "replacement": "[W]hat, under wholly altered historical circumstances, can have been found to replace the raw materials of magic and Otherness which medieval romance found ready to hand in its socioeconomic environment[?]" Moving now among a range of nineteenth-century texts, Jameson sorts through various "replacement strategies" that involve "the rationalizing interiorization of the form by way of the assimilation of historically new types of content"—until the point is reached at which "the reinvention of romance" crosses a generic divide and issues in the novel. Not only content and context, but form itself is involved in the transformative process Jameson illuminates through the figure of "formal *sedimentation*": "[W]hat this model implies is that in its emergent, strong form a genre is essentially a socio-symbolic message, or in other terms, that form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right. When such forms are reappropriated and refashioned in quite different social and cultural contexts, this message persists and must be functionally reckoned into the new form." Jameson's consummation of the historicizing method raises one question in particular. If the process of historical replacement puts form, content, and context equally in flux, what is continuous in the history of a genre would seem to be the persistent "ideological message" of its form. But what distinguishes the message of sedimented romance forms from that of (the sedimented form of) the novel?

Within the present collection, Benedict Anderson's study is suggestive not simply because it innovatively correlates the origins of the novel with the origins of modern nationalism, but because its basic disciplinary concerns reverse the anticipated relation of "text" to "context." Here the novel genre is not central but peripheral, not figure but ground, one modern institution among several whose role here is to contextualize and historicize the major object of study with which it is synchronous. How is the theory of the novel illuminated by this fundamental shift in perspective?

Anderson's mild polemic against the "evolutionary/progressive" failings of Marxist thought—its "hostility to any idea of continuity"—may well appear one-sided after the readings by Lukács, Jameson, and others.[7] It nonetheless invites us, as it were negatively, to think about the utility of conceiving not only the modern nation-state but also class and class-consciousness as an "imagined community." Coming to consciousness is in any case central to Anderson's interest in the historical status of the nation because it helps mark

6. See above, *Naked Man,* ch. 7. For the idea of an imaginary resolution of a real contradiction see above, headnote to pt. 2 and Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), 152–55.

7. Even more, given Anderson's dependence for his historiography on Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," a text shot through with a "historical materialism" to which the idea of continuity is indispensable.

where discontinuity impinges on continuity. On the one hand, the nation continues and extends the traditional, tacit cultural systems of religious community and the dynastic realm. On the other hand, it imposes the detachment of self-consciousness on what traditionally had been the "*unselfconscious coherence*," the "axiomatic grip," the "automatic legitimacy" of "taken-for-granted frames of reference." A psychological and perspectival phenomenon, this transformation clearly is also historiographic and linguistic: "[T]he mediaeval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations between past and present." "There is no idea here of a world so separated from language that all languages are equidistant (and thus interchangeable) signs for it."

If Anderson's argument thus rubs shoulders with those of the grand theorists on the transition from tradition to modernity, his interest in the novel also shares some of their concern with the way its discourse articulates the distance requisite for such separations. This is not, to be sure, the close stylistic analysis of novelistic form and content; Anderson's interest in the novel nonetheless has an important formal dimension. Along with the newspaper, it "provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation." By this Anderson means most broadly the novel's crucial participation in what he calls "print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways." But he also means a form of narration peculiar to modernity and analogous to the way the idea of the nation requires us to experience the temporality of human existence and relation. Temporality is the element of continuity; discontinuity is registered by the transition from traditional "simultaneity" to the modernity of "meanwhile."

Anderson's formulation calls up not only the grand theorists on the difference between epic and novelistic attitudes toward the past, but also the capillary expansiveness with which the later Lukács associates novelistic narrative and "the concrete historicism of all the details."[8] Space and time come together here to constitute a peculiarly modern, and novelistic, sense of "the present." By synchronizing disparate events, the temporality of "meanwhile" spatializes time so as to hypostatize "sociological entities" possessing an unprecedentedly "firm and stable reality." "The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation."

Several questions arise in the wake of this stimulating thesis. Anderson relies on Erich Auerbach's account of Christian typology to exemplify the traditionalist alternative to the modern temporality of "meanwhile." But in the celebrated first chapter of *Mimesis,* Auerbach is at pains to distinguish *two* modes of narrative temporality which ground the Western tradition—that of the Old Testament and that of the *Odyssey.* In Books 15 and 16 of Homer's epic, Telemachus sets sail up the Peloponnesian coast late one afternoon, turning north toward Ithaca during the night. While this journey is in progress, Homer's narrator takes us to the swineherd's hut in the Ithacan forest, where

8. See above, pt. 4.

the disguised Odysseus and his faithful servant sup after nightfall and converse almost until dawn. At this point the narrator returns us to the hero's son, whose ship now reaches the coast of Ithaca in time for the morning meal. Telemachus then instructs his men to sail for town while he proceeds inland on foot to the swineherd's hut, where he finds the two old friends finishing their own breakfast. Is this segment of epic plot any less illustrative of "meanwhile" temporality than Anderson's imaginary "segment of a simple novel-plot"? Indeed, when we appraise even Christian time not by the gloriously metaphysical standard of typological theology but by the more pragmatic criteria of political theory, we also encounter a pre-modern temporality closer to that of the "imagined community's" "meanwhile" than to that of "simultaneity."[9] How definitive is the temporality of "meanwhile" either of the novelistic or of the national imagination? In a related way, Anderson's brief exemplary readings of "four fictions from different cultures and different epochs" may persuade us that his concern is less with the nation as such than with the more broadly conceived idea of what he calls "socioscapes." On the other hand, Anderson's theoretical commitment to the coherence of the nation-idea may encourage him to assume in the novel an unproblematic coherence across decisive sociocultural (including colonial) spatial boundaries that would be more questionable had genre here the analytic status not of ground but of figure, not of context but of text.[10]

9. Thus the notion of the sempiternal *aevum* as this category was applied by late medieval commentators to political entities: see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957): "[T]he practical needs of kingdoms and communities led to the fiction of a quasi-infinite continuity of public institutions. [T]he 'plurality of persons' needed to form a collective body was constituted both ways: as it were, 'horizontally' by those living simultaneously, and 'vertically,' by those living successively" (282, 312).

10. For considerations of this problem in the theory of the novel, see Lévi-Strauss, "How Myths Die," above, ch. 7; and below, pts. 10, 14.

14

Ian Watt

From The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding

There are still no wholly satisfactory answers to many of the general questions which anyone interested in the early eighteenth-century novelists and their works is likely to ask: Is the novel a new literary form? And if we assume, as is commonly done, that it is, and that it was begun by Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, how does it differ from the prose fiction of the past, from that of Greece, for example, or that of the Middle Ages, or of seventeenth-century France? And is there any reason why these differences appeared when and where they did?

Such large questions are never easy to approach, much less to answer, and they are particularly difficult in this case because Defoe, Richardson and Fielding do not in the usual sense constitute a literary school. Indeed their works show so little sign of mutual influence and are so different in nature that at first sight it appears that our curiosity about the rise of the novel is unlikely to find any satisfaction other than the meager one afforded by the terms "genius" and "accident," the twin faces on the Janus of the dead ends of literary history. We cannot, of course, do without them: on the other hand there is not much we can do with them. The present inquiry therefore takes another direction: assuming that the appearance of our first three novelists within a single generation was probably not sheer accident, and that their geniuses could not have created the new form unless the conditions of the time had also been favorable, it attempts to discover what these favorable conditions in the literary and social situation were, and in what ways Defoe, Richardson and Fielding were its beneficiaries.

For this investigation our first need is a working definition of the characteristics of the novel—a definition sufficiently narrow to exclude previous types of narrative and yet broad enough to apply to whatever is usually put in the novel category. The novelists themselves do not help us very much here. It is true that both Richardson and Fielding saw themselves as founders of a new kind of writing, and that both viewed their work as involving a break with the old-fashioned romances; but neither they nor their contemporaries provide us with the kind of characterization of the new genre that we need;

indeed they did not even canonize the changed nature of their fiction by a change in nomenclature—our usage of the term "novel" was not fully established until the end of the eighteenth century.

With the help of their larger perspective the historians of the novel have been able to do much more to determine the idiosyncratic features of the new form. Briefly, they have seen "realism" as the defining characteristic which differentiates the work of the early eighteenth-century novelists from previous fiction. With their picture—that of writers otherwise different but alike in this quality of "realism"—one's initial reservation must surely be that the term itself needs further explanation, if only because to use it without qualification as a defining characteristic of the novel might otherwise carry the invidious suggestion that all previous writers and literary forms pursued the unreal.

The main critical associations of the term "realism" are with the French school of Realists. "Réalisme" was apparently first used as an aesthetic description in 1835 to denote the "vérité humaine" of Rembrandt as opposed to the "idéalité poétique" of neo-classical painting; it was later consecrated as a specifically literary term by the foundation in 1856 of *Réalisme,* a journal edited by Duranty.[1]

Unfortunately much of the usefulness of the word was soon lost in the bitter controversies over the "low" subjects and allegedly immoral tendencies of Flaubert and his successors. As a result, "realism" came to be used primarily as the antonym of "idealism," and this sense, which is actually a reflection of the position taken by the enemies of the French Realists, has in fact colored much critical and historical writing about the novel. The prehistory of the form has commonly been envisaged as a matter of tracing the continuity between all earlier fiction which portrayed low life: the story of the Ephesian matron is "realistic" because it shows that sexual appetite is stronger than wifely sorrow; and the fabliau or the picaresque tale are "realistic" because economic or carnal motives are given pride of place in their presentation of human behavior. By the same implicit premise, the English eighteenth-century novelists, together with Furetière, Scarron and Lesage in France, are regarded as the eventual climax of this tradition: the "realism" of the novels of Defoe, Richardson and Fielding is closely associated with the fact that Moll Flanders is a thief, Pamela a hypocrite, and Tom Jones a fornicator.

This use of "realism," however, has the grave defect of obscuring what is probably the most original feature of the novel form. If the novel were realistic merely because it saw life from the seamy side, it would only be an inverted romance; but in fact it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience, and not merely those suited to one particular literary perspective: the novel's realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it.

This, of course, is very close to the position of the French Realists themselves, who asserted that if their novels tended to differ from the more flattering pictures of humanity presented by many established ethical, social, and literary codes, it was merely because they were the product of a more dispassionate and scientific scrutiny of life than had ever been attempted before. It is far from clear that this ideal of scientific objectivity is desirable, and it certainly

cannot be realized in practice: nevertheless it is very significant that, in the first sustained effort of the new genre to become critically aware of its aims and methods, the French Realists should have drawn attention to an issue which the novel raises more sharply than any other literary form—the problem of the correspondence between the literary work and the reality which it imitates. This is essentially an epistemological problem, and it therefore seems likely that the nature of the novel's realism, whether in the early eighteenth century or later, can best be clarified by the help of those professionally concerned with the analysis of concepts, the philosophers.

I

By a paradox that will surprise only the neophyte, the term "realism" in philosophy is most strictly applied to a view of reality diametrically opposed to that of common usage—to the view held by the scholastic Realists of the Middle Ages that it is universals, classes or abstractions, and not the particular, concrete objects of sense-perception, which are the true "realities." This, at first sight, appears unhelpful, since in the novel, more than in any other genre, general truths only exist *post res;* but the very unfamiliarity of the point of view of scholastic Realism at least serves to draw attention to a characteristic of the novel which is analogous to the changed philosophical meaning of "realism" today: the novel arose in the modern period, a period whose general intellectual orientation was most decisively separated from its classical and medieval heritage by its rejection—or at least its attempted rejection—of universals.[2]

Modern realism, of course, begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses: it has its origins in Descartes and Locke, and received its first full formulation by Thomas Reid in the middle of the eighteenth century.[3] But the view that the external world is real, and that our senses give us a true report of it, obviously does not in itself throw much light on literary realism; since almost everyone, in all ages, has in one way or another been forced to some such conclusion about the external world by his own experience, literature has always been to some extent exposed to the same epistemological naïveté. Further, the distinctive tenets of realist epistemology, and the controversies associated with them, are for the most part much too specialized in nature to have much bearing on literature. What is important to the novel in philosophical realism is much less specific; it is rather the general temper of realist thought, the methods of investigation it has used, and the kinds of problems it has raised.

The general temper of philosophical realism has been critical, anti-traditional and innovating; its method has been the study of the particulars of experience by the individual investigator, who, ideally at least, is free from the body of past assumptions and traditional beliefs; and it has given a peculiar importance to semantics, to the problem of the nature of the correspondence between words and reality. All of these features of philosophical realism have analogies to distinctive features of the novel form, analogies which draw attention to the characteristic kind of correspondence between life and literature which has obtained in prose fiction since the novels of Defoe and Richardson.

A. The greatness of Descartes was primarily one of method, of the thoroughness of his determination to accept nothing on trust; and his *Discourse on Method* (1637) and his *Meditations* did much to bring about the modern assumption whereby the pursuit of truth is conceived of as a wholly individual matter, logically independent of the tradition of past thought, and indeed as more likely to be arrived at by a departure from it.

The novel is the form of literature which most fully reflects this individualist and innovating reorientation. Previous literary forms had reflected the general tendency of their cultures to make conformity to traditional practice the major test of truth: the plots of classical and renaissance epic, for example, were based on past history or fable, and the merits of the author's treatment were judged largely according to a view of literary decorum derived from the accepted models in the genre. This literary traditionalism was first and most fully challenged by the novel, whose primary criterion was truth to individual experience—individual experience which is always unique and therefore new. The novel is thus the logical literary vehicle of a culture which, in the last few centuries, has set an unprecedented value on originality, on the novel; and it is therefore well named.

This emphasis on the new accounts for some of the critical difficulties which the novel is widely agreed to present. When we judge a work in another genre, a recognition of its literary models is often important and sometimes essential; our evaluation depends to a large extent on our analysis of the author's skill in handling the appropriate formal conventions. On the other hand, it is surely very damaging for a novel to be in any sense an imitation of another literary work: and the reason for this seems to be that since the novelist's primary task is to convey the impression of fidelity to human experience, attention to any pre-established formal conventions can only endanger his success. What is often felt as the formlessness of the novel, as compared, say, with tragedy or the ode, probably follows from this: the poverty of the novel's formal conventions would seem to be the price it must pay for its realism.

But the absence of formal conventions in the novel is unimportant compared to its rejection of traditional plots. Plot, of course, is not a simple matter, and the degree of its originality or otherwise is never easy to determine; nevertheless a broad and necessarily summary comparison between the novel and previous literary forms reveals an important difference: Defoe and Richardson are the first great writers in our literature who did not take their plots from mythology, history, legend or previous literature. In this they differ from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, for instance, who, like the writers of Greece and Rome, habitually used traditional plots; and who did so, in the last analysis, because they accepted the general premise of their times that, since Nature is essentially complete and unchanging, its records, whether scriptural, legendary or historical, constitute a definitive repertoire of human experience.

This point of view continued to be expressed until the nineteenth century; the opponents of Balzac, for example, used it to deride his preoccupation with contemporary and, in their view, ephemeral reality. But at the same time, from the Renaissance onward, there was a growing tendency for individual

experience to replace collective tradition as the ultimate arbiter of reality; and this transition would seem to constitute an important part of the general cultural background of the rise of the novel.

It is significant that the trend in favor of originality found its first powerful expression in England, and in the eighteenth century; the very word "original" took on its modern meaning at this time, by a semantic reversal which is a parallel to the change in the meaning of "realism." We have seen that, from the medieval belief in the reality of universals, "realism" had come to denote a belief in the individual apprehension of reality through the senses: similarly the term "original" which in the Middle Ages had meant "having existed from the first" came to mean "underived, independent, first-hand"; and by the time that Edward Young in his epoch-making *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) hailed Richardson as "a genius as well moral as original,"[4] the word could be used as a term of praise meaning "novel or fresh in character or style."

The novel's use of non-traditional plots is an early and probably independent manifestation of this emphasis. When Defoe, for example, began to write fiction he took little notice of the dominant critical theory of the day, which still inclined toward the use of traditional plots; instead, he merely allowed his narrative order to flow spontaneously from his own sense of what his protagonists might plausibly do next. In so doing Defoe initiated an important new tendency in fiction: his total subordination of the plot to the pattern of the autobiographical memoir is as defiant an assertion of the primacy of individual experience in the novel as Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* was in philosophy.

After Defoe, Richardson and Fielding in their very different ways continued what was to become the novel's usual practice, the use of non-traditional plots, either wholly invented or based in part on a contemporary incident. It cannot be claimed that either of them completely achieved that interpenetration of plot, character and emergent moral theme which is found in the highest examples of the art of the novel. But it must be remembered that the task was not an easy one, particularly at a time when the established literary outlet for the creative imagination lay in eliciting an individual pattern and a contemporary significance from a plot that was not itself novel.

B. Much else besides the plot had to be changed in the tradition of fiction before the novel could embody the individual apprehension of reality as freely as the method of Descartes and Locke allowed their thought to spring from the immediate facts of consciousness. To begin with, the actors in the plot and the scene of their actions had to be placed in a new literary perspective: the plot had to be acted out by particular people in particular circumstances, rather than, as had been common in the past, by general human types against a background primarily determined by the appropriate literary convention.

This literary change was analogous to the rejection of universals and the emphasis on particulars which characterizes philosophic realism. Aristotle might have agreed with Locke's primary assumption, that it was the senses which "at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the empty cabinet" of the mind.[5] But he would have gone on to insist that the scrutiny of particular cases was of little value in itself; the proper intellectual task of man was to rally

against the meaningless flux of sensation, and achieve a knowledge of the universals which alone constituted the ultimate and immutable reality.[6] It is this generalizing emphasis which gives most Western thought until the seventeenth century a strong enough family resemblance to outweigh all its other multifarious differences: similarly when in 1713 Berkeley's Philonous affirmed that "it is an universally received maxim, that *everything which exists is particular,*"[7] he was stating the opposite modern tendency which in turn gives modern thought since Descartes a certain unity of outlook and method.

Here, again, both the new trends in philosophy and the related formal characteristics of the novel were contrary to the dominant literary outlook. For the critical tradition in the early eighteenth century was still governed by the strong classical preference for the general and universal: the proper object of literature remained *quod semper quod ubique ab omnibus creditum est.* This preference was particularly pronounced in the neo-Platonist tendency, which had always been strong in the romance, and which was becoming of increasing importance in literary criticism and aesthetics generally. Shaftesbury, for instance, in his *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709), expressed the distaste of this school of thought for particularity in literature and art very emphatically: "The variety of Nature is such, as to distinguish every thing she forms, by a *peculiar* original character; which, if strictly observed, will make the subject appear unlike to anything extant in the world besides. But this effect the good poet and painter seek industriously to prevent. They hate *minuteness,* and are afraid of *singularity.*"[8] He continued: "The mere Face-Painter, indeed, has little in common with the Poet; but, like the mere Historian, copies what he sees, and minutely traces every feature, and odd mark"; and concluded confidently that "'Tis otherwise with men of invention and design."

Despite Shaftesbury's engaging finality, however, a contrary aesthetic tendency in favor of particularity soon began to assert itself, largely as a result of the application to literary problems of the psychological approach of Hobbes and Locke. Lord Kames was perhaps the most forthright early spokesman of this tendency. In his *Elements of Criticism* (1762) he declared that "abstract or general terms have no good effect in any composition for amusement; because it is only of particular objects that images can be formed";[9] and Kames went on to claim that, contrary to general opinion, Shakespeare's appeal lay in the fact that "every article in his descriptions is particular, as in nature."

In this matter, as in that of originality, Defoe and Richardson established the characteristic literary direction of the novel form long before it could count on any support from critical theory. Not all will agree with Kames that "every article" in Shakespeare's descriptions is particular; but particularity of description has always been considered typical of the narrative manner of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pamela.* Richardson's first biographer, indeed, Mrs. Barbauld, described his genius in terms of an analogy which has continually figured in the controversy between neo-classical generality and realistic particularity. Sir Joshua Reynolds, for example, expressed his neo-classical orthodoxy by preferring the "great and general ideas" of Italian painting to the "literal truth and . . . minute exactness in the detail of nature modified by accident" of the Dutch school;[10] whereas the French Realists, it will be remembered, had fol-

lowed the "vérité humaine" of Rembrandt, rather than the "idéalité poétique" of the classical school. Mrs. Barbauld accurately indicated Richardson's position in this conflict when she wrote that he had "the accuracy of finish of a Dutch painter . . . content to produce effects by the patient labour of minuteness."[11] Both he and Defoe, in fact, were heedless of Shaftesbury's scorn, and like Rembrandt were content to be "mere face-painters and historians."

The concept of realistic particularity in literature is itself somewhat too general to be capable of concrete demonstration: for such demonstration to be possible the relationship of realistic particularity to some specific aspects of narrative technique must first be established. Two such aspects suggest themselves as of especial importance in the novel—characterization, and presentation of background: the novel is surely distinguished from other genres and from previous forms of fiction by the amount of attention it habitually accords both to the individualization of its characters and to the detailed presentation of their environment.

C. Philosophically the particularizing approach to character resolves itself into the problem of defining the individual person. Once Descartes had given the thought processes within the individual's consciousness supreme importance, the philosophical problems connected with personal identity naturally attracted a great deal of attention. In England, for example, Locke, Bishop Butler, Berkeley, Hume and Reid all debated the issue, and the controversy even reached the pages of the *Spectator.*[12]

The parallel here between the tradition of realist thought and the formal innovations of the early novelists is obvious: both philosophers and novelists paid greater attention to the particular individual than had been common before. But the great attention paid in the novel to the particularization of character is itself such a large question that we will consider only one of its more manageable aspects: the way that the novelist typically indicates his intention of presenting a character as a particular individual by naming him in exactly the same way as particular individuals are named in ordinary life.

Logically the problem of individual identity is closely related to the epistemological status of proper names; for, in the words of Hobbes, "Proper names bring to mind one thing only; universals recall any one of many."[13] Proper names have exactly the same function in social life: they are the verbal expression of the particular identity of each individual person. In literature, however, this function of proper names was first fully established in the novel.

Characters in previous forms of literature, of course, were usually given proper names; but the kind of names actually used showed that the author was not trying to establish his characters as completely individualized entities. The precepts of classical and renaissance criticism agreed with the practice of their literature in preferring either historical names or type names. In either case, the names set the characters in the context of a large body of expectations primarily formed from past literature, rather than from the context of contemporary life. Even in comedy, where characters were not usually historical but invented, the names were supposed to be "characteristic," as Aristotle tells us,[14] and they tended to remain so until long after the rise of the novel.

Earlier types of prose fiction had also tended to use proper names that were characteristic, or non-particular and unrealistic in some other way; names that either, like those of Rabelais, Sidney or Bunyan, denoted particular qualities, or like those of Lyly, Aphra Behn or Mrs. Manley, carried foreign, archaic or literary connotations which excluded any suggestion of real and contemporary life. The primarily literary and conventional orientation of these proper names was further attested by the fact that there was usually only one of them—Mr. Badman or Euphues; unlike people in ordinary life, the characters of fiction did not have both given name and surname.

The early novelists, however, made an extremely significant break with tradition, and named their characters in such a way as to suggest that they were to be regarded as particular individuals in the contemporary social environment. Defoe's use of proper names is casual and sometimes contradictory; but he very rarely gives names that are conventional or fanciful—one possible exception, Roxana, is a pseudonym which is fully explained; and most of the main characters such as Robinson Crusoe or Moll Flanders have complete and realistic names or aliases. Richardson continued this practice, but was much more careful and gave all of his major characters, and even most of his minor ones, both a given name and a surname. He also faced a minor but not unimportant problem in novel writing, that of giving names that are subtly appropriate and suggestive, yet sound like ordinary realistic ones. Thus the romance-connotations of Pamela are controlled by the commonplace family name of Andrews; both Clarissa Harlowe and Robert Lovelace are in many ways appropriately named; and indeed nearly all Richardson's proper names, from Mrs. *Sin*clair to Sir Charles *Grand*ison, sound authentic and are yet suited to the personalities of the bearers.

Fielding, as an anonymous contemporary critic pointed out, christened his characters "not with fantastic high-sounding Names, but such as, tho' they sometimes had some reference to the Character, had a more modern termination."[15] Such names as Heartfree, Allworthy and Square are certainly modernized versions of the type name, although they are just credible; even Western or Tom Jones suggest very strongly that Fielding had his eye as much on the general type as on the particular individual. This, however, does not controvert the present argument, for it will surely be generally agreed that Fielding's practice in the naming, and indeed in the whole portrayal of his characters, is a departure from the usual treatment of these matters in the novel. Not, as we have seen in Richardson's case, that there is no place in the novel for proper names that are in some way appropriate to the character concerned: but that this appropriateness must not be such as to impair the primary function of the name, which is to symbolize the fact that the character is to be regarded as though he were a particular person and not a type.

Fielding, indeed, seems to have realized this by the time he came to write his last novel, *Amelia:* there his neo-classical preference for type-names finds expression only in such minor characters as Justice Thrasher and Bondum the bailiff; and all the main characters—the Booths, Miss Matthews, Dr. Harrison, Colonel James, Sergeant Atkinson, Captain Trent and Mrs. Bennet, for example—have ordinary and contemporary names. There is, indeed, some

evidence that Fielding, like some modern novelists, took these names somewhat at random from a printed list of contemporary persons—all the surnames given above are in the list of subscribers to the 1724 folio edition of Gilbert Burnet's *History of His Own Time,* an edition which Fielding is known to have owned.[16]

Whether this is so or not, it is certain that Fielding made considerable and increasing concessions to the custom initiated by Defoe and Richardson of using ordinary contemporary proper names for their characters. Although this custom was not always followed by some of the later eighteenth-century novelists, such as Smollett and Sterne, it was later established as part of the tradition of the form; and, as Henry James pointed out with respect to Trollope's fecund cleric Mr. Quiverful,[17] the novelist can only break with the tradition at the cost of destroying the reader's belief in the literal reality of the character concerned.

D. Locke had defined personal identity as an identity of consciousness through duration in time; the individual was in touch with his own continuing identity through memory of his past thoughts and actions.[18] This location of the source of personal identity in the repertoire of its memories was continued by Hume: "Had we no memory, we never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person."[19] Such a point of view is characteristic of the novel; many novelists, from Sterne to Proust, have made their subject the exploration of the personality as it is defined in the interpenetration of its past and present self-awareness.

Time is an essential category in another related but more external approach to the problem of defining the individuality of any object. The "principle of individuation" accepted by Locke was that of existence at a particular locus in space and time: since, as he wrote, "ideas become general by separating from them the circumstances of time and place,"[20] so they become particular only when both these circumstances are specified. In the same way the characters of the novel can only be individualized if they are set in a background of particularized time and place.

Both the philosophy and the literature of Greece and Rome were deeply influenced by Plato's view that the Forms or Ideas were the ultimate realities behind the concrete objects of the temporal world. These forms were conceived as timeless and unchanging,[21] and thus reflected the basic premise of their civilization in general that nothing happened or could happen whose fundamental meaning was not independent of the flux of time. This premise is diametrically opposed to the outlook which has established itself since the Renaissance, and which views time, not only as a crucial dimension of the physical world, but as the shaping force of man's individual and collective history.

The novel is in nothing so characteristic of our culture as in the way that it reflects this characteristic orientation of modern thought. E. M. Forster sees the portrayal of "life by time" as the distinctive role which the novel has added to literature's more ancient preoccupation with portraying "life by values";[22] Spengler's perspective for the rise of the novel is the need of "ultrahistorical"

modern man for a literary form capable of dealing with "the whole of life";[23] while more recently Northrop Frye has seen the "alliance of time and Western man" as the defining characteristic of the novel compared with other genres.[24]

We have already considered one aspect of the importance which the novel allots the time dimension: its break with the earlier literary tradition of using timeless stories to mirror the changing moral verities. The novel's plot is also distinguished from most previous fiction by its use of past experience as the cause of present action: a causal connection operating through time replaces the reliance of earlier narratives on disguises and coincidences, and this tends to give the novel a much more cohesive structure. Even more important, perhaps, is the effect upon characterization of the novel's insistence on the time process. The most obvious and extreme example of this is the stream of consciousness novel which purports to present a direct quotation of what occurs in the individual mind under the impact of the temporal flux; but the novel in general has interested itself much more than any other literary form in the development of its characters in the course of time. Finally, the novel's detailed depiction of the concerns of everyday life also depends upon its power over the time dimension: T. H. Green pointed out that much of man's life had tended to be almost unavailable to literary representation merely as a result of its slowness;[25] the novel's closeness to the texture of daily experience directly depends upon its employment of a much more minutely discriminated time-scale than had previously been employed in narrative.

The role of time in ancient, medieval and renaissance literature is certainly very different from that in the novel. The restriction of the action of tragedy to twenty-four hours, for example, the celebrated unity of time, is really a denial of the importance of the temporal dimension in human life; for, in accord with the classical world's view of reality as subsisting in timeless universals, it implies that the truth about existence can be as fully unfolded in the space of a day as in the space of a lifetime. The equally celebrated personifications of time as the winged chariot or the grim reaper reveal an essentially similar outlook. They focus attention, not on the temporal flux, but on the supremely timeless fact of death; their role is to overwhelm our awareness of daily life so that we shall be prepared to face eternity. Both these personifications, in fact, resemble the doctrine of the unity of time in that they are fundamentally ahistorical, and are therefore equally typical of the very minor importance accorded to the temporal dimension in most literature previous to the novel.

Shakespeare's sense of the historical past, for example, is very different from the modern one. Troy and Rome, the Plantagenets and the Tudors, none of them are far enough back to be very different from the present or from each other. In this Shakespeare reflects the view of his age: he had been dead for thirty years before the word "anachronism" first appeared in English,[26] and he was still very close to the medieval conception of history by which, whatever the period, the wheel of time churns out the same eternally applicable *exempla.*

This ahistorical outlook is associated with a striking lack of interest in the minute-by-minute and day-to-day temporal setting, a lack of interest which has caused the time scheme of so many plays both by Shakespeare and by most of his predecessors from Aeschylus onward, to baffle later editors and critics.

The attitude to time in early fiction is very similar; the sequence of events is set in a very abstract continuum of time and space, and allows very little importance to time as a factor in human relationships. Coleridge noted the "marvellous independence and true imaginative absence of all particular space or time in the 'Faerie Queene'";[27] and the temporal dimension of Bunyan's allegories or the heroic romances is equally vague and unparticularized.

Soon, however, the modern sense of time began to permeate many areas of thought. The late seventeenth century witnessed the rise of a more objective study of history and therefore of a deeper sense of the difference between the past and the present.[28] At the same time Newton and Locke presented a new analysis of the temporal process;[29] it became a slower and more mechanical sense of duration which was minutely enough discriminated to measure the falling of objects or the succession of thoughts in the mind.

These new emphases are reflected in the novels of Defoe. His fiction is the first which presents us with a picture both of the individual life in its larger perspective as a historical process, and in its closer view which shows the process being acted out against the background of the most ephemeral thoughts and actions. It is true that the time scales of his novels are sometimes both contradictory in themselves, and inconsistent with their pretended historical setting, but the mere fact that such objections arise is surely a tribute to the way the characters are felt by the reader to be rooted in the temporal dimension. We obviously could not think of making such objections seriously to Sidney's *Arcadia* or *The Pilgrim's Progress;* there is not enough evidence of the reality of time for any sense of discrepancies to be possible. Defoe does give us such evidence. At his best, he convinces us completely that his narrative is occurring at a particular place and at a particular time, and our memory of his novels consists largely of these vividly realized moments in the lives of his characters, moments which are loosely strung together to form a convincing biographical perspective. We have a sense of personal identity subsisting through duration and yet being changed by the flow of experience.

This impression is much more strongly and completely realized in Richardson. He was very careful to locate all his events of his narrative in an unprecedentedly detailed time-scheme: the superscription of each letter gives us the day of the week, and often the time of the day; and this in turn acts as an objective framework for the even greater temporal detail of the letters themselves—we are told, for example, that Clarissa died at 6.40 P.M. on Thursday, 7th September. Richardson's use of the letter form also induced in the reader a continual sense of actual participation in the action which was until then unparalleled in its completeness and intensity. He knew, as he wrote in the "Preface" to *Clarissa,* that it was "Critical situations . . . with what may be called *instantaneous* descriptions and reflections" that engaged the attention best; and in many scenes the pace of the narrative was slowed down by minute description to something very near that of actual experience. In these scenes Richardson achieved for the novel what D. W. Griffith's technique of the "close-up" did for the film: added a new dimension to the representation of reality.

Fielding approached the problem of time in his novels from a more external and traditional point of view. In *Shamela* he poured scorn on Richardson's

use of the present tense: "Mrs. Jervis and I are just in bed, and the door unlocked; if my master should come—Ods-bobs! I hear him just coming in at the door. You see I write in the present tense, as Parson William says. Well, he is in bed between us."[30] In *Tom Jones* he indicated his intention of being much more selective than Richardson in his handling of the time dimension: "We intend . . . rather to pursue the method of those writers who profess to disclose the revolutions of countries, than to imitate the painful and voluminous historian, who, to preserve the regularity of his series, thinks himself obliged to fill up as much paper with the detail of months and years in which nothing remarkable happened, as he employs upon those notable eras when the greatest scenes have been transacted on the human stage."[31] At the same time, however, *Tom Jones* introduced one interesting innovation in the fictional treatment of time. Fielding seems to have used an almanac, that symbol of the diffusion of an objective sense of time by the printing press: with slight exceptions, nearly all the events of his novel are chronologically consistent, not only in relation to each other, and to the time that each stage of the journey of the various characters from the West Country to London would actually have taken, but also in relation to such external considerations as the proper phases of the moon and the time-table of the Jacobite rebellion in 1745, the supposed year of the action.[32]

E. In the present context, as in many others, space is the necessary correlative of time. Logically the individual, particular case is defined by reference to two co-ordinates, space and time. Psychologically, as Coleridge pointed out, our idea of time is "always blended with the idea of space."[33] The two dimensions, indeed, are for many practical purposes inseparable, as is suggested by the fact that the words "present" and "minute" can refer to either dimension; while introspection shows that we cannot easily visualize any particular moment of existence without setting it in its spatial context also.

Place was traditionally almost as general and vague as time in tragedy, comedy and romance. Shakespeare, as Johnson tells us, "had no regard to distinction of time or place";[34] and Sidney's *Arcadia* was as unlocalized as the Bohemian limbos of the Elizabethan stage. In the picaresque novel, it is true, and in Bunyan, there are many passages of vivid and particularized physical description; but they are incidental and fragmentary. Defoe would seem to be the first of our writers who visualized the whole of his narrative as though it occurred in an actual physical environment. His attention to the description of milieu is still intermittent; but occasional vivid details supplement the continual implication of his narrative and make us attach Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders much more completely to their environments than is the case with previous fictional characters. Characteristically, this solidity of setting is particularly noticeable in Defoe's treatment of movable objects in the physical world: in *Moll Flanders* there is much linen and gold to be counted, while Robinson Crusoe's island is full of memorable pieces of clothing and hardware.

Richardson, once again occupying the central place in the development of the technique of narrative realism, carried the process much further. There is little description of natural scenery, but considerable attention is paid to

interiors throughout his novels. Pamela's residences in Lincolnshire and Bedfordshire are real enough prisons; we are given a highly detailed description of Grandison Hall; and some of the descriptions in *Clarissa* anticipate Balzac's skill in making the setting of the novel a pervasive operating force—the Harlowe mansion becomes a terrifyingly real physical and moral environment.

Here, too, Fielding is some way from Richardson's particularity. He gives us no full interiors, and his frequent landscape descriptions are very conventionalized. Nevertheless *Tom Jones* features the first Gothic mansion in the history of the novel:[35] and Fielding is as careful about the topography of his action as he is about its chronology; many of the places on Tom Jones's route to London are given by name, and the exact location of the others is implied by various other kinds of evidence.

In general, then, although there is nothing in the eighteenth-century novel which equals the opening chapters of *Le Rouge et le noir* or *Le Père Goriot,* chapters which at once indicate the importance which Stendhal and Balzac attach to the environment in their total picture of life, there is no doubt that the pursuit of verisimilitude led Defoe, Richardson and Fielding to initiate that power of "putting man wholly into his physical setting" which constitutes for Allen Tate the distinctive capacity of the novel form;[36] and the considerable extent to which they succeeded is not the least of the factors which differentiate them from previous writers of fiction and which explain their importance in the tradition of the new form.

F. The various technical characteristics of the novel described above all seem to contribute to the furthering of an aim which the novelist shares with the philosopher—the production of what purports to be an authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals. This aim involved many other departures from the traditions of fiction besides those already mentioned. What is perhaps the most important of them, the adaptation of prose style to give an air of complete authenticity, is also closely related to one of the distinctive methodological emphases of philosophical realism.

Just as it was the Nominalist skepticism about language which began to undermine the attitude to universals held by the scholastic Realists, so modern realism soon found itself faced with the semantic problem. Words did not all stand for real objects, or did not stand for them in the same way, and philosophy was therefore faced with the problem of discovering their rationale. Locke's chapters at the end of the third Book of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* are probably the most important evidence of this trend in the seventeenth century. Much of what is said there about the proper use of words would exclude the great bulk of literature since, as Locke sadly discovers, "eloquence, like the fair sex," involves a pleasurable deceit.[37] On the other hand, it is interesting to note that although some of the "abuses of language" which Locke specifies, such as figurative language, had been a regular feature of the romances, they are much rarer in the prose of Defoe and Richardson than in that of any previous writer of fiction.

The previous stylistic tradition for fiction was not primarily concerned with the correspondence of words to things, but rather with the extrinsic

beauties which could be bestowed upon description and action by the use of rhetoric. Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* had established the tradition of linguistic ornateness in the Greek romances and the tradition had been continued in the Euphuism of John Lyly and Sidney, and in the elaborate conceits, or "phébus," of La Calprenède and Madeleine de Scudéry. So even if the new writers of fiction had rejected the old tradition of mixing poetry with their prose, a tradition which had been followed even in narratives as completely devoted to the portrayal of low life as Petronius's *Satyricon,* there would still have remained a strong literary expectation that they would use language as a source of interest in its own right, rather than as a purely referential medium.

In any case, of course, the classical critical tradition in general had no use for the unadorned realistic description which such a use of language would imply. When the 9th *Tatler* (1709) introduced Swift's "Description of the Morning" as a work where the author had "run into a way perfectly new, and described things as they happen," it was being ironical. The implicit assumption of educated writers and critics was that an author's skill was shown, not in the closeness with which he made his words correspond to their objects, but in the literary sensitivity with which his style reflected the linguistic decorum appropriate to its subject. It is natural, therefore, that it is to writers outside the circle of wit that we should have to turn for our earliest examples of fictional narrative written in a prose which restricts itself almost entirely to a descriptive and denotative use of language. Natural, too, that both Defoe and Richardson should have been attacked by many of the better educated writers of the day for their clumsy and often inaccurate way of writing.

Their basically realistic intentions, of course, required something very different from the accepted modes of literary prose. It is true that the movement towards clear and easy prose in the late seventeenth century had done much to produce a mode of expression much better adapted to the realistic novel than had been available before; while the Lockean view of language was beginning to be reflected in literary theory—John Dennis, for example, proscribed imagery in certain circumstances on the ground that it was unrealistic: "No sort of imagery can ever be the language of grief. If a man complains in simile, I either laugh or sleep."[38] Nevertheless the prose norm of the Augustan period remained much too literary to be the natural voice of Moll Flanders or Pamela Andrews: and although the prose of Addison, for example, or Swift, is simple and direct enough, its ordered economy tends to suggest an acute summary rather than a full report of what it describes.

It is therefore likely that we must regard the break which Defoe and Richardson made with the accepted canons of prose style, not an incidental blemish, but rather as the price they had to pay for achieving the immediacy and closeness of the text to what is being described. With Defoe this closeness is mainly physical, with Richardson mainly emotional, but in both we feel that the writer's exclusive aim is to make the words bring his object home to us in all its concrete particularity whatever the cost in repetition or parenthesis or verbosity. Fielding, of course, did not break with the traditions of Augustan prose style or outlook. But it can be argued that this detracts from the authenticity of his narratives. Reading *Tom Jones* we do not imagine that we are eaves-

dropping on a new exploration of reality; the prose immediately informs us that exploratory operations have long since been accomplished, that we are to be spared that labor, and presented instead with a sifted and clarified report of the findings.

There is a curious antinomy here. On the one hand, Defoe and Richardson make an uncompromising application of the realist point of view in language and prose structure, and thereby forfeit other literary values. On the other hand, Fielding's stylistic virtues tend to interfere with his technique as a novelist, because a patent selectiveness of vision destroys our belief in the reality of report, or at least diverts our attention from the content of the report to the skill of the reporter. There would seem to be some inherent contradiction between the ancient and abiding literary values and the distinctive narrative technique of the novel.

That this may be so is suggested by a parallel with French fiction. In France, the classical critical outlook, with its emphasis on elegance and concision, was not fully challenged until the coming of Romanticism. It is perhaps partly for this reason that French fiction from *La Princesse de Clèves* to *Les Liaisons dangereuses* stands outside the main tradition of the novel. For all its psychological penetration and literary skill, we feel it is too stylish to be authentic. In this Madame de La Fayette and Choderlos de Laclos are the polar opposites of Defoe and Richardson, whose very diffuseness tends to act as a guarantee of the authenticity of their report, whose prose aims exclusively at what Locke defined as the proper purpose of language, "to convey the knowledge of things,"[39] and whose novels as a whole pretend to be no more than a transcription of real life—in Flaubert's words, "le réel écrit."

It would appear, then, that the function of language is much more largely referential in the novel than in other literary forms; that the genre itself works by exhaustive presentation rather than by elegant concentration. This fact would no doubt explain both why the novel is the most translatable of the genres; why many undoubtedly great novelists, from Richardson and Balzac to Hardy and Dostoevsky, often write gracelessly, and sometimes with downright vulgarity; and why the novel has less need of historical and literary commentary than other genres—its formal convention forces it to supply its own footnotes.

II

So much for the main analogies between realism in philosophy and literature. They are not proposed as exact; philosophy is one thing and literature is another. Nor do the analogies depend in any way on the presumption that the realist tradition in philosophy was a cause of the realism of the novel. That there was some influence is very likely, especially through Locke, whose thought everywhere pervades the eighteenth-century climate of opinion. But if a causal relationship of any importance exists it is probably much less direct: both the philosophical and the literary innovations must be seen as parallel manifestations of larger change—that vast transformation of Western civilization since the Renaissance which has replaced the unified world picture of the Middle Ages with another very different one—one which presents us,

essentially, with a developing but unplanned aggregate of particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places.

Here, however, we are concerned with a much more limited conception, with the extent to which the analogy with philosophical realism helps to isolate and define the distinctive narrative mode of the novel. This, it has been suggested, is the sum of literary techniques whereby the novel's imitation of human life follows the procedures adopted by philosophical realism in its attempt to ascertain and report the truth. These procedures are by no means confined to philosophy; they tend, in fact, to be followed whenever the relation to reality of any report of an event is being investigated. The novel's mode of imitating reality may therefore be equally well summarized in terms of the procedures of another group of specialists in epistemology, the jury in a court of law. Their expectations, and those of the novel reader coincide in many ways: both want to know "all the particulars" of a given case—the time and place of the occurrence; both must be satisfied as to the identities of the parties concerned, and will refuse to accept evidence about anyone called Sir Toby Belch or Mr. Badman—still less about a Chloe who has no surname and is "common as the air"; and they also expect the witnesses to tell the story "in his own words." The jury, in fact, takes the "circumstantial view of life," which T. H. Green[40] found to be the characteristic outlook of the novel.

The narrative method whereby the novel embodies this circumstantial view of life may be called its formal realism; formal, because the term realism does not here refer to any special literary doctrine or purpose, but only to a set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel, and so rarely in other literary genres, that they may be regarded as typical of the form itself. Formal realism, in fact, is the narrative embodiment of a premise that Defoe and Richardson accepted very literally, but which is implicit in the novel form in general: the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms.

Formal realism is, of course, like the rules of evidence, only a convention; and there is no reason why the report on human life which is presented by it should be in fact any truer than those presented through the very different conventions of other literary genres. The novel's air of total authenticity, indeed, does tend to authorize confusion on this point: and the tendency of some Realists and Naturalists to forget that the accurate transcription of actuality does not necessarily produce a work of any real truth or enduring literary value is no doubt partly responsible for the rather widespread distaste for Realism and all its works which is current today. This distaste, however, may also promote critical confusion by leading us into the opposite error; we must not allow an awareness of certain shortcomings in the aims of the Realist school to obscure the very considerable extent to which the novel in general, as much in Joyce as in Zola, employs the literary means here called formal realism. Nor must we forget that, although formal realism is only a convention, it has, like

all literary conventions, its own peculiar advantages. There are important differences in the degree to which different literary forms imitate reality; and the formal realism of the novel allows a more immediate imitation of individual experience set in its temporal and spatial environment than do other literary forms. Consequently the novel's conventions make much smaller demands on the audience than do most literary conventions; and this surely explains why the majority of readers in the last two hundred years have found in the novel the literary form which most closely satisfies their wishes for a close correspondence between life and art. Nor are the advantages of the close and detailed correspondence to real life offered by formal realism limited to assisting the novel's popularity; they are also related to its most distinctive literary qualities, as we shall see.

In the strictest sense, of course, formal realism was not discovered by Defoe and Richardson; they only applied it much more completely than had been done before. Homer, for example, as Carlyle pointed out,[41] shared with them that outstanding "clearness of sight" which is manifested in the "detailed, ample and lovingly exact" descriptions that abound in their works; and there are many passages in later fiction, from *The Golden Ass* to *Aucassin and Nicolette,* from Chaucer to Bunyan, where the characters, their actions and their environment are presented with a particularity as authentic as that in any eighteenth-century novel. But there is an important difference: in Homer and in earlier prose fiction these passages are relatively rare, and tend to stand out from the surrounding narrative; the total literary structure was not consistently oriented in the direction of formal realism, and the plot especially, which was usually traditional and often highly improbable, was in direct conflict with its premises. Even when previous writers had overtly professed a wholly realistic aim, as did many seventeenth-century writers, they did not pursue it wholeheartedly. La Calprenède, Richard Head, Grimmelshausen, Bunyan, Aphra Behn, Furetière,[42] to mention only a few, had all asserted that their fictions were literally true; but their prefatory asseverations are no more convincing than the very similar ones to be found in most works of medieval hagiography. The aim of verisimilitude had not been deeply enough assimilated in either case to bring about the full rejection of all the non-realistic conventions that governed the genre.

For reasons to be considered in the next chapter, Defoe and Richardson were unprecedentedly independent of the literary conventions which might have interfered with their primary intentions, and they accepted the requirements of literal truth much more comprehensively. Of no fiction before Defoe's could Lamb have written, in terms very similar to those which Hazlitt used of Richardson,[43] "It is like reading evidence in a court of Justice."[44] Whether that is in itself a good thing is open to question; Defoe and Richardson would hardly deserve their reputation unless they had other and better claims on our attention. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the development of a narrative method capable of creating such an impression is the most conspicuous manifestation of that mutation of prose fiction which we call the novel; the historical importance of Defoe and Richardson therefore primarily depends on the suddenness and completeness with which they

brought into being what may be regarded as the lowest common denominator of the novel genre as a whole, its formal realism.

Notes

1. See Bernard Weinberg, *French Realism: The Critical Reaction 1830–1870* (London, 1937), p. 114.

2. See R. I. Aaron, *The Theory of Universals* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 18–41.

3. See S. Z. Hasan, *Realism* (Cambridge, 1928), chs. 1, 2.

4. *Works* (1773), V, 125; see also Max Scheler, *Versuche zu einer Soziologie des Wissens* (München and Leipzig, 1924), pp. 104ff.; Elizabeth L. Mann, "The Problem of Originality in English Literary Criticism, 1750–1800," *PQ,* XVIII (1939), 97–118.

5. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), bk. I, ch. 2, sect. xv.

6. See *Posterior Analytics,* bk. I, ch. 24; bk. II, ch. 19.

7. First *Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous,* 1713, in Berkeley, *Works,* ed. Luce and Jessop (London, 1949), II, 192.

8. Pt. IV, sect. 3.

9. 1763 ed., III, 198–199.

10. *Idler,* No. 79 (1759). See also Scott Elledge, "The Background and Development in English Criticism of the Theories of Generality and Particularity," *PMLA,* LX (1945), 161–174.

11. *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson,* 1804, I, cxxxvii. For similar comments by contemporary French readers, see Joseph Texte, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature* (London, 1899), pp. 174–175.

12. No. 578 (1714).

13. *Leviathan* (1651), pt. I, ch. 4.

14. *Poetics,* ch. 9.

15. *Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding,* 1751, p. 18. This whole question is treated more fully in my "The Naming of Characters in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding," *RES,* XXV (1949), 322–338.

16. See Wilbur L. Cross, *History of Henry Fielding* (New Haven, 1918), I, 342–343.

17. *Partial Portraits* (London, 1888), p. 118.

18. *Human Understanding,* bk. II, ch. 27, sects. ix, x.

19. *Treatise of Human Nature,* bk. I, pt. 4, sect. vi.

20. *Human Understanding,* bk. III, ch. 3, sect. vi.

21. Plato does not specifically state that the Ideas are timeless, but the notion, which dates from Aristotle (*Metaphysics,* bk. XII, ch. 6), underlies the whole system of thought with which they are associated.

22. *Aspects of the Novel* (London, 1949), pp. 29–31.

23. *Decline of the West,* trans. Atkinson (London, 1928), I, 130–131.

24. "The Four Forms of Fiction," *Hudson Review,* II (1950), 596.

25. "Estimate of the Value and Influence of Works of Fiction in Modern Times" (1862), *Works,* ed. Nettleship (London, 1888), III, 36.

26. See Herman J. Ebeling, "The Word Anachronism," *MLN,* LII (1937), 120–121.

27. *Selected Works,* ed. Potter (London, 1933), p. 333.

28. See G. N. Clark, *The Later Stuarts, 1660–1714* (Oxford, 1934), pp. 362–366; René Wellek, *The Rise of English Literary History* (Chapel Hill, 1941), ch. 2.

29. See esp. Ernst Cassirer, "Raum und Zeit," *Das Erkenntnisproblem . . .* (Berlin, 1922–23), II, 339–374.

30. Letter 6.

31. Bk. II, ch. 1.

32. As was shown by F. S. Dickson (Cross, *Henry Fielding,* II, 189–193).

33. *Biographia Literaria,* ed. Shawcross (London, 1907), I, 87.

34. Preface (1765), *Johnson on Shakespeare,* ed. Raleigh (London, 1908), pp. 21–22.

35. See Warren Hunting Smith, *Architecture in English Fiction* (New Haven, 1934), p. 65.

36. "Techniques of Fiction," in *Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, 1920–1951,* ed. Aldridge (New York, 1952), p. 41.

37. Bk. III, ch. 10, sects. xxxiii–xxxiv.

38. Preface, *The Passion of Byblis, Critical Works,* ed. Hooker (Baltimore, 1939–43), I, 2.

39. *Human Understanding,* bk. III, ch. 10, sect. xxiii.

40. "Estimate," *Works,* III, 37.

41. "Burns," *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (New York, 1899), I, 276–277.

42. See A. J. Tieje, "A Peculiar Phase of the Theory of Realism in Pre-Richardsonian Prose-Fiction," *PMLA,* XXVII (1913), 213–252.

43. "He sets about describing every object and transaction, as if the whole had been given in on evidence by an eye-witness" (*Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (New York, 1845), p. 138).

44. Letter to Walter Wilson, Dec. 16, 1822, printed in the latter's *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel de Foe* (London, 1830, III, 428).

15

Michael McKeon

Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER its first appearance, Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* continues to be the most attractive model we have of how to conduct the study of this crucial literary phenomenon.[1] The phenomenon is crucial because it is modern. If the novel originated in early modern Europe, it should be possible to observe and describe its emergence within a historical context whose richness of detail has no parallel in earlier periods. But of course this is no coincidence: it is the rise of an unprecedented historical consciousness, and of its institutional affiliates, that has both encouraged the preservation of historical detail, and legitimated contextual methods of study which use that detail as a mode of understanding. Watt's book is attractive because it is fully responsive to the call for a historical and contextual method of study that seems somehow implicit in his subject. Thus his concern with the rise of a distinctive set of narrative procedures—"formal realism"—is informed by a concern with a parallel innovation in philosophical discourse, and these he connects, in turn, with a set of socioeconomic developments at whose center are the rise of the middle class, the growth of commercial capitalism, and the concomitant eclipse of feudal and aristocratic modes of intercourse. The analogy between these historical strands is most succinctly accounted for in their shared "individualism"—that is, in their common validation of individual experience—a term that allows Watt at various points to argue the importance to his subject of a fourth major strand of historical experience, the Protestant Reformation.

Watt's account of the unity of the historical context in which the novel arose is far more subtle, as all readers know, than this bald outline can suggest. And its general persuasiveness is evident in the fact that the sort of criticism to which it has seemed most vulnerable has aimed not to refute the relevance of historical context, but to complicate Watt's version of it. The problem is perhaps most notorious in the social strand of his context. Where is the evidence, critics have asked, for the dominance of the middle class in the early eighteenth century? How is it distinguished from the traditional social categories of the nobility and gentry, which clearly survive the rapid social mobility

of the seventeenth century and persist into the eighteenth with considerable power and prestige? Don't the novels of Henry Fielding, an indispensable figure in the rise of the novel, evince a social attitude much closer to that of a middling gentry than to that of a putatively flourishing commercial middle class? But even in the literary realm, critics have also been preoccupied with a problem of persistence. The narrative procedures of Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Fielding may explicitly subvert the idea and ethos of romance, but they also draw, without apparent irony, on many of its stock situations and conventions. Although Watt pays little attention to it, and then only as a superseded genre, romance can be seen to inhabit both the form and the content of these early eighteenth-century narratives. And once again it is Fielding who points the problem most acutely, since he has little use for several of those narrative procedures that have been advanced as the *sine qua non* of the new form.

From this brief summary it is clear that the two central problems with Watt's account of the rise of the novel are versions of each other. His treatment of the early modern historical context, because of its very richness, has sensitized us to what has been left out: the romance and the aristocracy. By the end of the eighteenth century, the conceptual categories of "the novel" and "the middle class" will be sufficiently stable to enjoy the stability of that nomenclature. But it is of course precisely in the period that we wish most definitively to understand—the period of crucial transformation—that such categories are most unstable and most resistant to being strictly identified either as what they are going to be, or as what they once were. What is required, then, is an understanding of how conceptual categories, whether "literary" or "social," exist at moments of historical change: how new forms first coalesce as tenable categories by being known in terms of, and against, more traditional forms that have thus far been taken to define the field of possibility. We must begin, in other words, with the very fact of categorial instability in the later seventeenth century.

Let me pause for a moment before entering my argument, in order to summarize it. What I have to say is based on a set of terms and relations that will recur from time to time throughout the essay. They are not particularly complicated, but I think it will be helpful to lay them out as quickly and clearly as possible. I plan to describe the two great instances of categorial instability that are central to the rise of the novel. The first sort of instability has to do with generic categories; the second with social categories. The instability of generic categories registers an epistemological crisis, a major cultural transition in attitudes toward how to tell the truth in narrative. For convenience, I will call the set of problems associated with this epistemological crisis, "questions of truth." The instability of social categories registers a cultural crisis in attitudes toward how the external social order is related to the internal, moral state of its members. For convenience, I will call the set of problems associated with this social and moral crisis, "questions of virtue." Questions of truth and questions of virtue concern different realms of human experience, and they are likely to be raised in very different contexts. Yet in one central respect they are closely analogous. Questions of truth and virtue both pose problems of

signification: What kind of authority or evidence is required of narrative to permit it to signify truth to its readers? What kind of social existence or behavior signifies an individual's virtue to others?

As we will see, the instability of generic and social categories is symptomatic of a change in attitudes about how truth and virture are most authentically signified. But for both questions, we can observe the process of change only if we break it down into its component parts. Let me summarize this breakdown: first, for questions of truth. At the beginning of the period of our concern, the reigning narrative epistemology involves a dependence on received authorities and a priori traditions; I will call this posture "romance idealism." In the seventeenth century, it is challenged and refuted by an empiricist epistemology that derives from many sources, and this I will call "naïve empiricism." But this negation of romance, having embarked on a journey for which it has no maps, at certain points loses its way. And it becomes vulnerable, in turn, to a counter-critique that has been generated by its own over-enthusiasm. I will call this counter-critique "extreme skepticism." As we will see, in refuting its empiricist progenitor, extreme skepticism inevitably recapitulates some features of the romance idealism which it is equally committed to opposing. For questions of virtue, the terms alter, but the two-part pattern of reversal is very much the same as for questions of truth. We begin with a relatively stratified social order, supported by a reigning world view which I will call "aristocratic ideology." Spurred by social change, this ideology is attacked and subverted by its prime antagonist, "progressive ideology." But at a certain point, progressive ideology gives birth to its own critique, which is both more radical than itself, and harks back to the common, aristocratic enemy. I will call this counter-critique "conservative ideology."

Needless to say, contemporaries did not articulate these several positions as consciously formulated and coherent doctrines. I have abstracted these ideologies and epistemologies from a large body of early modern discourse, in order to isolate the principal stages in the process of historical change that we refer to when we speak of "the rise of the novel." By this means, I think, we may come closer to conceiving how change occurs: how the past can persist into the present, and help to mediate the establishment of difference through the perpetuation of similarity. Let me now proceed to fill in the spaces in my argument.

I

I will begin with questions of truth and the instability of the system of narrative genres in the seventeenth century. Evidence for the unstable usage of terminology lies everywhere, but it is most striking in explicit attempts to categorize the several genres of narrative. In 1672, the bookseller John Starkey advertised his list of publications in a catalogue divided into the following categories: Divinity; Physick; Law; History; Poetry and Plays; and Miscellanies. Under the heading of "history" he includes Suetonius, Rabelais, what he calls the "Novels" of Quevedo, biographies, travel narratives, and a contemporary work that we would be likely to see as a popular romance.[2] By modern standards, the most pressing problem raised by such usage is the absence of

any will to distinguish consistently between "history" and "literature," "fact" and "fiction." But on the other hand, the catalogue of William London, printed fifteen years earlier, obligingly separates "History" from "Romances, Poems and Playes."[3]

What is most significant about this sort of usage is that it is not entirely foreign to us. Unlike traditional generic taxonomies, it evinces a real, but markedly inconsistent, commitment to comprehend its categories within a basic discrimination between the "factual" and the "fictional." Indeed, it is the inconsistent imposition of this recognizably "modern" concern on a more traditional system that makes the usage of this period look so chaotic. What it represents, I think, is a movement between opposed conceptions of how to tell the truth in narrative. Another sign of this movement is the transformation which the term "romance" has undergone in the past hundred years. Despite the neutral usage that I have just quoted, by the end of the seventeenth century the ascendant meaning of "romance" is both far broader, and far more pejorative, than before. Increasingly, the idea of romance dominates the thought of the Restoration and early eighteenth century as a means of describing, and most often of discrediting, a particular, idealist way of knowing. Romance comes to stand for a species of deceit that undiscriminatingly includes lying and fictionalizing, and the category to which it is most often opposed is not "the novel," but "true history."

Many cultural movements contributed to the naïve empiricist championing of "true history." Three of the most important are also closely intertwined: the scientific revolution, the typographical revolution, and the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, in all three of these movements we can see both the dominant influence of naïve empiricism, and the stealthy emergence of a subversive, extreme skepticism. I will begin with the new science. In his history of the founding institution of the new science, Thomas Sprat compares unfavorably the ancient mode of natural history with that of his fellow moderns: it "is not the true following of *Nature* . . . It is like *Romances,* in respect of *True History.*"[4] The new science was dedicated, of course, to objective observation, experiment, and related principles of empirical method. And it was deeply interested in trying to embody these principles in literary technique and form. According to the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, "we have more need of severe, full and punctuall Truth, than of Romances of Panegyricks."[5] To this end, the Society even undertook to instruct foreign travelers in the best literary techniques for ensuring what we might call the "historicity" of their journals. It enlisted the aid of Robert Boyle and the mathematician Lawrence Rooke to formulate directions not only for how to keep a travel journal, but also for how to turn it into a narrative without diluting its crucial historicity.[6]

It is not too much to say that these directions amount to one of the most important, explicit bodies of literary theory composed in conjunction with the origins of the English novel. They prescribe a preferred style and rhetoric that correspond to a new type of the man of letters, the ethically and socially humble recorder of reality who is enabled to master the new knowledge by his very innocence of the old. In Sprat's words, the new breed are "plain, diligent,

and laborious observers: such, who though they bring not much knowledg [sic], yet bring their hands, and their eyes uncorrupted: such as have not their Brains infected by false Images."[7] One such observer is described by the editors of the multi-volume collection of travel narratives in terms that might collectively be called the convention of the claim to historicity: "This Narrative has nothing of Art or Language, being left by an ignorant Sailor, who, as he confesses, was in no better a Post than Gunner's Mate, and that to a *Greenland* Fisher; and therefore the Reader can expect no more than bare matter of Fact, deliver'd in a homely Stile, which it was not fit to alter, lest it might breed a Jealousy that something had been chang'd more than the bare Language."[8] According to another, equally conventional, traveler, "it would be no difficult Matter to embellish a Narrative with many Romantick Incidents, to please the unthinking Part of Mankind, who swallow every thing an artful Writer thinks fit to impose upon their Credulity, without any Regard to Truth or Probability. The judicious are not taken with such Trifles; . . . and they easily distinguish between Reality and Fiction."[9]

At the heart of the claim to historicity is the assertion that what one is describing really happened. And it is not hard to hear in these sober claims the naïve empiricism of Defoe and Richardson, both of whom pretend to be only the editors of authentic documents whose plain and artless truth is above question. But if we permit the sobriety of the voices slightly to extend into self-parody, we also can detect the extreme skepticism of Swift and Fielding, subverting the claim to historicity by carrying it to absurdity. This is one example of how naïve empiricism generates its own, radically skeptical, critique. Let me turn now to another example, one related not to the new science but to the new typography.

To a certain extent, we owe the very notion of comparative and competing accounts of the same event to the opportunity for comparison uniquely provided by print. Printing produces documentary objects that can be collected, categorized, collated, and edited. Like science, it promotes the norm of "objective" research, and it favors criteria of judgment that are appropriate to discrete and empirically apprehensible "objects": singularity, formal coherence, and self-consistency. Finally, print encourages a test of veracity that accords with the process itself of typographical reproduction, namely, the exact replication of objects or events in their external and quantitative dimensions.[10] Contemporaries were conscious of the epistemological powers of print. William Winstanley describes "some I have known (otherwise ingenious enough) apt to believe idle Romances, and Poetical Fictions, for Historical Varieties [i.e., verities], . . . and for this only reason, *Because they are Printed.*"[11] But only a slight extension of this awe brings us to the satiric stance of Cervantes, who has a great deal of fun at the expense of characters—including Sancho Panza—who naïvely believe everything they see in print. In fact much of the self-reflexive pleasure of part II of *Don Quixote* lies in watching its characters compare the documentary objectivity of part I (which has already been printed) with the more fallible standard of truth upheld by private memory and experience.[12] Cervantes himself naïvely claims that his book is a "true history" dedicated to the critique of chivalric romance. But we know to read

this affiliation, as well as his playful attitude toward print, as at least in part a skeptical critique of naïve empiricism.

My third and final example concerns the contribution of Reformation thought to naïve empiricism and its subversion. Protestantism, like the standard of "true history," elevates individual and closely observed experience over the a priori pronouncements of tradition. But Protestantism is also the religion of the Book, of the documentary object, and as such it inevitably tends to elevate the truth of Scripture as the truth of "true history." This documentary and empiricist emphasis is clear in the great works of the Protestant tradition. The central aim of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563, 1570) is the documentation of the Protestant martyrs, and the task is achieved in an aura of scrupulous historicity and with a battery of editorial procedures that are dedicated to the critical authentication of every historical detail.[13] Such authenticating procedures may also be found in John Bunyan's *Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), even though its protagonist is a palpable fiction. Bunyan claims that it is based on "True stories, that are neither *Lye,* nor *Romance* . . . All which are things either fully known by me, or being eye and ear-witness thereto, or that I have received from such hands, whose relation as to this, I am bound to believe."[14] By the same token, Protestant spirituality encouraged individual saints to a scrupulous documentation of their own "true histories." When Ralph Thoresby first went up to London, his father sent him a typical directive: "I would have you, in a little book, which you may either buy or make of two or three sheets of paper, take a little journal of any thing remarkable every day, principally as to yourself."[15]

So from the beginning, Protestantism was deeply invested in the materialistically oriented techniques of naïve empiricism as a useful means to its spiritual and otherworldly ends. The potential contradiction between worldly means and otherworldly ends is most apparent in writings like the "apparition narratives" of the later seventeenth century; Defoe's *A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal* (1706) is the best-known of them today. These narratives use the evidence of the senses in order to prove the extra-sensory world of spirit. They deploy an extraordinary arsenal of authenticating devices—names, places, dates, events, eye- and ear-witness testimony, etc.—in order to prove the reality of the invisible world. Richard Baxter explained his own important contribution to the form in terms that poignantly convey the dilemma of a culture divided between two competing standards of truth that still seem somehow reconcilable: "Apparitions, and other sensible Manifestations of the certain existence of Spirits of themselves Invisible, was a means that might do much with such as are prone to judge by Sense."[16] But it is a very short distance from Baxter's earnest and spiritualizing dependence on the evidence of the senses to the realm of conscious satire. Consider those moderns in Swift's early satires who mistake their own bodily wind for the spirit of intellect and divinity.[17] Once again, that is, the counter-critique of extreme skepticism is involuntarily extruded by naïve empiricism itself as a form of subversive self-parody.

But over time, extreme skepticism emerges as a self-conscious and autonomous stance in its own right. Its premises are the same as those of the naïve

empiricism which it undertakes to negate. It is equally critical, that is, of "romance," but it is so thoroughly skeptical as to discredit empiricist skepticism itself as nothing more than a new, and artfully modernized, species of the old romance. It is this counter-critique that will issue eventually in Fielding's narrative form. Along the way we may observe certain milestones, narratives—like William Congreve's *Incognita* (1691)—which elegantly achieve the double negation that is characteristic of the form: first, of the fictions of romance, and then of naïve empiricism itself. But like its antagonist, the counter-critique of extreme skepticism undergoes a considerable development; I have space only to offer several exemplary quotations.

Richard Steele is an important figure in the attack on naïve empiricism. Echoing pamphleteers of the mid-seventeenth century, for example, he argued in one of his periodical letters that newspapers were to England what books of chivalry had been to Spain.[18] Steele was also critical of the claim to historicity in the genre of the secret memoir, which was especially popular among what he called "some merry gentlemen of the French nation." The secret memoir claimed, as Steele observed, to give the true history of military campaigns or court intrigues even though their mendacious authors had really been cowering behind the lines or scribbling in a drafty garret.[19] Writing of the same phenomenon, Pierre Bayle observed that thus "the new romances [that is, these supposedly historical memoirs] keep as far off as possible from the romantic way: but by this means true history is made extremely obscure; and I believe the civil powers will at last be forced to give these new romancers their option; either to write pure history, or pure romance."[20] Henry Stubbe compared the natural histories of the Royal Society to "the story of *Tom Thumb,* and all the *Legends* or *falsifications of History,* which the *Papists* obtrude upon us."[21] The language is striking: whether implicitly or explicitly, over and over true history is discredited as the new romance. The skeptical critique of travel historicity was similarly acerbic. The dubious reader of a typically authenticated travel narrative of 1675 confuted the pamphlet's overheated claims by coolly writing on its title page: "By a new fashion'd Romancer."[22] The most thorough and trenchant critique of travel historicity was made by the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, who began, as Steele did, with the remark that "these are in our present Days, what *Books of Chivalry* were, in those of our Forefathers."[23] As the critique of naïve empiricism gained momentum toward the end of the century, parodic impersonation seemed to offer itself as the most likely means of subversion. Another dubious reader of travel narratives wrote the following parody of a rival's fashionably plain style of objective narration: "*We cast Anchor: We made ready to Sail. The Wind took Courage.* Robin *is dead. We said Mass. We Vomited.* [Then he continues in his own, sarcastic voice.] Tho' they are poor Words any where else, yet in his Book which is half compos'd of them, they are Sentences, and the worth of them is not to be told."[24]

But if this kind of extreme skepticism was to become more than an (admittedly liberating) act of subversion, it was obliged, like the subversive stance of naïve empiricism before it, to elaborate an alternative, positive, and coherent conception of how to tell the truth in narrative. And here its position was

quite as unstable as that of its opponent. For if the claim to historicity is naïvely posited as the negation of the negation of romance idealism, how tenuous must be that secret sanctuary of truth, distinct both from romance and from too confident a historicity, which is defined by the meta-critical act of double negation? With hindsight we might want to say that the counter-critique of extreme skepticism was groping toward a mode of narrative truth-telling which, through the very self-consciousness of its own fictionality, somehow detoxifies fiction of its error. But the ingenuity of this maneuver could itself look more like a mask for the stealthy recapitulation of romance lies. Consider Fielding's ostentatious indulgence in romance conventions, or Swift's obviously parabolic narratives. Indeed, the sheer defensiveness of this counter-stance makes it parasitic upon, and reproductive of, the errors of the enemy. If naïve empiricism is too sanguine regarding its own powers of negating romance fiction, its critique is too skeptical about that possibility, and it risks, through its reactive method of parodic impersonation, the effectual affirmation of what it is equally committed to replacing.

Both epistemologies, in other words, are unstable. I would argue that they attain stability not in themselves but in each other, in their dialectical relationship, as two competing versions of how to tell the truth in narrative, which, in their competition, constitute one part of the origins of the novel. The paradigmatic case is *Pamela* (1740) vs. *Shamela* (1741), since it is then that the conflict emerges into public consciousness and is institutionalized as a battle over whether it is Richardson or Fielding that is creating the "new species of writing." My argument is that it is, rather, the conjuction of the two. But I would also point out that the logic of our progress through the seventeenth century into the middle of the eighteenth argues against trying to pinpoint "the first novel," or even its first dialectical engagement. Before *Pamela* and *Shamela,* for example, there is the tacit but crucial confrontation between *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), a confrontation to which I will return. The novel rises not in the isolated emergence of a great text or two, but as an experimental process consisting of many different stages.

II

So far our attention has been focused on epistemological instability, and the series of critiques by which questions of truth are propounded. We must now turn to the analogous questions of virtue, to the instability of socioeconomic categories, and to the interaction between what I have called the aristocratic, progressive, and conservative ideologies. In the seventeenth century, the traditional imprecision in the use of status categories is complicated by an unprecedented rate of social mobility. The effects of this mobility are suggested by the fact that it is at this time that attempts begin to be made to assess the population not according to a traditional, status stratification, but by annual income and expenditures. This amounts to the first, systematic emergence of the modern impulse to classify society according to the fundamentally economic criteria of class.

The form taken by these population tables is quite relevant to our purposes, because they provide the sort of evidence of instability, on the subject

of social categories, that we found in publishers' book lists on the subject of generic categories. Gregory King's celebrated table of the 1690s ostensibly aims to give a continuous financial, and therefore quantitative, progression from the top to the bottom of English society. But he is obliged to work with both honorific and occupational categories, and around the middle of his table the two sorts of category become intermixed in a way that undermines the purpose of the project. For in several cases, King lists status categories above occupational ones, even though the crucial standard of average yearly income should reverse the orders. In other words, King's abiding respect for the traditional status hierarchy momentarily overrules his modernizing aim to create a hierarchy of incomes. The qualitative criteria of status infiltrate and disrupt the effort at a quantitative categorization.[25] Half a century later, in 1760, Joseph Massie carried over King's six traditional categories of elevated status to the top of his own table. But they repose there aloof and untouched, a kind of honorific gesture that has nothing to do with the real work of economic discrimination, for which Massie uses completely different categories in the rest of his table. In other words, status categories persist here as a vestigial remnant of a mode of thought which, however useless in the definitive description of contemporary English people by class, still appears indispensable.[26]

In both men, the instability of social categories owes to a discrepancy between two standards of classification, that of "status" and that of "class." It reflects what we might call a crisis of "status inconsistency," a divergence of power, wealth, and status widespread and persistent enough to resist the methods by which stable societies traditionally have accommodated the instances of non-correspondence that occasionally must arise. One such method is the traditional granting or selling of honors to newly enriched but ignoble families. To speak of "traditional" societies is also to speak of societies dominated by what I have called an "aristocratic" ideology. In aristocratic culture, it is not only that power, wealth, and honorific status most often accompany each other; honor also is understood to imply personal merit or virtue. Thus the social hierarchy is a great system of signification: the outward forms of genealogy and social rank are taken to signify an analogous, intrinsic moral order. The seventeenth-century crisis of status inconsistency therefore strikes at the moral foundations of aristocratic ideology. The sale of honors became, in Lawrence Stone's phrase, an "inflation," and the latent tension between honorific and monetary criteria became a glaring contradiction for contemporaries.[27] The word "honor" itself acquired a more complicated import. As a neutral term of description, its meaning was, in effect, internalized, changing from "title of rank" to "goodness of character."[28] But "honor" in the more traditional sense of the term, like "romance," had fallen on very hard times.

We can hear this in the genial contempt expressed by Bernard Mandeville. For Mandeville, honor "is only to be met with in People of the better sort, as some Oranges have kernels, and others not, tho' the outside be the same. In great Families it is like the Gout, generally counted Hereditary, and all Lords Children are born with it. . . . But there is nothing that encourages the Growth of it more than a Sword, and upon the first wearing of one, some People have felt considerable Shutes of it, in Four and twenty Hours."[29] The

aristocratic system of signification held no illusions for Stephen Penton, either. For "if Merit were to be the Standard of Worldly Happiness, what great desert is there in being born Eldest Son and Heir to several Thousands a Year, when sometimes it falls out, that the Person is hardly able to Answer Two or Three the easiest Questions in the World wisely enough to save himself from being Begg'd?"[30] William Sprigge plausibly argued that "the younger Son is apt to think himself sprung from as Noble a stock, from the loyns of as good a Gentleman as his elder Brother, and therefore cannot but wonder, why fortune and the Law should make so great a difference between them that lay in the same wombe, that are formed of the same lumpe; why Law or Custome should deny them an estate, whom nature hath given discretion to know how to manage it."[31] And Defoe draws the versified conclusion:

> What is't to us, what Ancestors we had?
> If Good, what better? or what worse, if Bad?
> . . . .
> For Fame of Families is all a Cheat,
> *'Tis Personal Virtue only makes us great.*[32]

In the realm of social change, the idea of "personal virtue" occupies the place that "true history" does in epistemology. For progressive ideology, elevated birth is an arbitrary accident which should not be taken to signify worth. If it is, it becomes a fiction, an imaginary value, like "honor" a mere "romance." Thus Defoe observes that when gentlemen "value themselves as exalted in birth above the rest of the world," it is upon the basis of a strictly "imaginary honour."[33] *Real* honor, honor of *character,* attaches to personal virtue. And Defoe heartily approved of the assimilationist practice whereby the meritorious and newly risen crowned their merit through the purchase of titles of rank.

But what were Swift's views on questions of virtue? Swift was as caustic as Defoe on the subject of aristocratic pretension. But he was far more inclined to see the ideas of inherited honor and gentle birth as useful fictions that had an instrumental social value. "Suppose there be nothing but *Opinion* in the Difference of Blood," he wrote. "Surely, that Difference is not wholly imaginary. . . . It should seem that the Advantage lies on the Side of Children, born from noble and wealthy Parents . . . [And] Ancient and honorable Birth[,] . . . whether it be of real or imaginary Value, hath been held in Veneration by all wise, polite States, both Ancient and Modern."[34] It may seem puzzling that men like Swift should return to half-embrace the very fiction they have rejected. But we already have seen this sort of movement in the return of extreme skepticism to a form of self-conscious romancing. For progressives like Defoe, aristocratic ideology was subverted and replaced by a brave new view of social signification. Virtue is signified not by the a priori condition of having been born with status and honor, but by the ongoing experience of demonstrated achievement and just reward. Thus the status inconsistency endemic to aristocratic culture is rectified, in this progressive view, by upward mobility through state service, private employment, or any other method of industrious self-application. To conservatives like Swift, this progressive model of the career open to talents was deeply repellent, as we will see. But the negation of both

aristocratic and progressive ideology left conservative ideology without a positive and stable view of how the social injustice of status inconsistency ever might be overcome.

From the conservative point of view, progressive ideology only replaced the old social injustice by a new and more brutal version of it, unsoftened now by any useful fictions of inherited authority. At the heart of this new system was the naked cash nexus. For the conservative, the archetypal progressive upstart rose by exploiting the capitalist market, and especially the new mechanisms of financial investment and public credit which were established at the end of the seventeenth century. For men like Swift, only landed property had real value. All other property was, as he put it, "transient and imaginary," but most of all that of exchange value.[35] Defoe also recognized that the modern world of exchange value was ruled by, in his phrase, "the Power of Imagination."[36] And he perceived that in some mysterious sense, capitalist credit was only a secularization of aristocratic honor. But Defoe was convinced that the circulation of money and the opportunity for capital accumulation were essential if individual merit were to be dependably signified and rewarded. For Swift, the market exchange of commodities only established a new elite of the undeserving on the grounds of a new, and far more dangerous, species of corruption. That is, it only institutionalized a new form of status inconsistency: namely, wealth and power without virtue. As for honorific status, the situation had become hopelessly confused. To the conservative mentality, there was an obvious corruption in those progressive upstarts who sought to legitimate their rise by the purchase of a title. But the system of honors was itself corrupted, and many ancient landed families were as thoroughly indebted to the capitalist market for the improvement of their estates as anyone.

Here, as on questions of truth, the doubly critical posture of men like Swift left very little ground for the affirmation of any positive social signifier of merit and virtue. With the triumph of Whig oligarchy in the eighteenth century, the aristocratic order seems to regain its stability after the rapid social mobility of the previous century. But the status category of "aristocracy" has altered considerably, even if the terminology has remained the same. The status orientation itself has been complicated by a class orientation—by individualistic and monetary criteria and by capitalist practices. The rise of the middle class, in other words, was not the rise of a discrete and determinate social entity, but a historical process in which traditional status groups were altered as much from within as from without. And the rise of the middle class is inseparable from the rise of a class orientation toward social relations. Men like Swift knew this; they knew that the enemy was not so easily distinguished as an ungentle, upstart invader from without. Nevertheless, for lack of a more dependable signifier, they retained in their minds the possession of land and gentle status as a self-consciously conventional signification of what seemed an increasingly embattled virtue.

Why should narrative, in particular, be suitable for the representation of progressive and conservative ideologies? The term "ideology" often is used to suggest a simplistic reduction of human complexity. But as I intend the term, "ideology" is discourse whose purpose is to mediate and explain apparently

intractable social problems—in this case, the problematic questions of virtue. To explain the condition of status inconsistency is not to explain it away, but to render it intelligible. In fact, the very plausibility of ideological explanation depends on the degree to which it appears to do justice to the contradictory social reality that it seeks to explain. In the present context, ideological explanation works by telling stories. The question of how virtue is signified has an inherently narrative focus because it is concerned with genealogical succession and individual progress, with how human capacity is manifested in and through time. This concern can be seen in the "macro-narrative" of seventeenth-century history itself, which provided writers with an important model for their novelistic micro-narratives. Seventeenth-century England was vitally concerned with the problem of political sovereignty and its sources. At the beginning of the century, sovereignty seemed to rest with the king and to be validated by, among other things, his genealogical inheritance of royalty. In 1642, Charles I warned that parliament's challenge to royal sovereignty threatened the very continuity of the historical succession. The great danger, he said, was that at last the common people would "destroy all rights and proprieties, all distinctions of families and merit, and by this means this splendid and excellently distinguished form of government end in a dark, equal chaos of confusion, and the long line of our many noble ancestors in a Jack Cade or a Wat Tyler."[37] Charles was not entirely wrong in this apocalyptic prophecy: seven years after it he was decapitated. And before the end of the century, the nation had joined together to depose another rightful monarch and to exclude the next fifty-seven prospective heirs to the throne. In their place was crowned a foreigner, and in the place of sovereignty by genealogical inheritance was affirmed sovereignty by achievement: the simple and pragmatic fact that a peaceful and stable settlement had been achieved.[38]

In the language of questions of virtue, the fall of Charles I is the most infamous instance of status inconsistency in the century. And after the Battle of Worcester in 1651, Prince Charles wandered the land in disguise like nothing so much as a romance hero destined, after much travail, to be discovered and restored to his aristocratic patrimony.[39] But to readers of a progressive persuasion, the triumphs of Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange showed, in different ways, the superiority of industrious valor to mere lineage. Progressive ideology even entered into the making of Cromwell's New Model Army. In 1643 he declared: "I had rather have a plain russett-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else. . . . Better plain men than none, but best to have men patient of wants, faithful and conscientious in the employment."[40]

Cromwell's language here reminds us that Calvinist Protestantism has an important relevance to progressive ideology, for God's mark of inner nobility was superior to any external social elevation. Speaking of divine election, Cromwell asked: "May not this stamp [of God] bear equal poise with any hereditary interest?"[41] And, as a coreligionist affirmed, "It is not the birth, but the new birth, that makes men truly noble."[42] If Calvinist election argued a new aristocracy alternative to that of birth, Calvinist discipline dictated a spirit of service and reform that worked both to glorify the works of God and to

signify one's possession of grace. But what are the narrative implications of this dovetailing of Protestant belief and progressive ideology? As early as Foxe's *Acts and Monuments,* the apocalyptic battle between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and God's saints is colored by the progressive contest between corrupt noblemen and industrious commoners. Foxe's "Story of Roger Holland, Martyr," for example, is the tale of an apprentice who is idle and licentious until the moment of his Protestant conversion. Thereafter he prospers wonderfully as a merchant tailor. So when the reformed apprentice is finally called up before his papist inquisitor, he is able to manifest, through a spirited resistance and a serene martyrdom, that spiritual grace which already has been apparent in his labor discipline and his material prosperity.[43]

Calvinist doctrine encouraged in progressive narrative the self-serving conviction that divine grace could be internalized as virtue, and externalized once again as worldy achievement. But Calvinism also counseled against the proud sufficiency of human desire, and it sharpened the conservative critique of enthusiasm and the Protestant ethic. The adventures of Robinson Crusoe exemplify both the ethical obstacles to progressive ideology, and the power of that ideology to drive all before it. Robinson Crusoe is an industrious younger son whose worldly success at first signifies nothing more than acquisitiveness and ambition. But once he is shipwrecked, his island turns out to be a progressive utopia. Because it excludes all human society, it provides an arena in which the anti-social passions of avarice and domination can be indulged without suffering the consequences. Thus Robinson can accumulate goods without creating exchange value. He can exercise absolute sovereignty without incurring the wrath of a greater authority. And when human society finds him, and it comes time to leave the island, he is able to naturalize the artificial, laboratory conditions of his utopia because he has learned to internalize divinity, to identify his own passions with the will of God. A slighter version of this progressive, utopian plot is given by Henry Neville, whose George Pine is an industrious city apprentice who happens to stumble into a travel narrative.[44] Stranded with four women on an Edenic desert island where productive labor is unneeded, Pine resourcefully proceeds to manifest his merit through reproductive labor, populating the island with offspring who then constitute a new genealogy and social order, of which he is the unquestioned sovereign.

But the progressive battle between aristocratic corruption and industrious virtue could of course be waged in a setting closer to home. Often it was embodied in plots that pitted aristocratic seducers, rapists, and dunderheads against chaste and canny young women of the middle and lower orders. The obvious exemplar is Richardson's *Pamela* (although it is by no means the rule that virtue should be so ostentatiously rewarded as hers is). Behind Pamela lies a succession of Pamela-like heroines, including the sister of Gabriel Harvey (Spenser's college friend), who left a manuscript account of her pert resistance to seduction.[45] The most important development of this particular progressive plot model was achieved by Aphra Behn, whose ingenious variations include a female aristocratic oppressor who is pathologically fixated on nobility of birth as the trigger of sexual desire, and who is finally reformed by falling in love with an apparent nobleman who turns out to be the son of a Dutch merchant.[46]

Whatever their differences, progressive plots have in common the aim to explain the meaning of the current crisis of status inconsistency, and, in the symbolic realm of fictional action, to overcome it. How do conservative plots manage this explanation so as to subvert progressive ideology itself? One method is by making the oppressor an aristocrat not by birth but by purchase, and his ruling corruption not sexual desire, but the lust for money and power. But the villains of conservative plots need not be aristocrats at all. Fielding's undeserving upstarts, like Shamela and Jonathan Wild, show an obvious debt to the assorted rogues, highwaymen, and pirates of criminal biography. When Charles Davenant undertook to describe the fall of English virtue under the Whigs, he cast his macro-history in the pseudo-autobiographical form of a micro-narrative about the rise of the rogue figure Mr. Double, "now worth Fifty thousand Pound, and 14 years ago I had not Shoes on my Feet." Mr. Double's story is that of a bad apprentice whose vice is not idleness but too much industry, and he ends his allegorical autobiography by comparing himself to "most of the Modern Whigs . . . Did they rise by Virtue or Merit? No more than myself."[47]

When conservative protagonists are sympathetic, they are victims of the modern world—either comically ingenuous innocents, or sacrifices to its corrupt inhumanity. One of the striking achievements of *Gulliver's Travels* is that its protagonist is able to fill both of these conservative roles. Like Robinson Crusoe, Lemuel Gulliver begins as a naïve and industrious younger son, a quantifying empiricist and an upwardly mobile progressive. In Lilliput he falls into the role of the obsequious new man, hungry for royal favor and titles of honor (recall his assimilationist vanity at being made a Nardac, the highest honor in the land). But Gulliver in Lilliput is also a hardworking public servant who ruefully learns, like Lord Munodi later on, the conservative truth about modern courts and their disdain for true merit. However, in his final voyage Gulliver so successfully assimilates upward that he goes native, believes he is a Houyhnhnm, and is forced to endure the comic rustication of an unsuccessful upstart, bloated with pride and uncomprehendingly indignant at his failure to make it.

In this final character of Gulliver (or in that of Shamela) we see the industrious virtue of the progressive protagonist pushed to its limit, so that it breaks open to reveal an ugly core of hypocritical opportunism. This technique of parodic impersonation is typical both of conservative ideology, and of its epistemological counterpart, extreme skepticism. It is the mark of a stance so intricately reactive as to be hard to pry loose, at times, from what it opposes. Moreover, unlike progressive narrative, conservative plots are far from hopeful about the overcoming of the social injustice and status inconsistency which they explain with such passion. Their frequent pattern is a retrograde series of disenchantments with all putative resolutions, and conservative utopias tend to be, as Houyhnhnmland is and as Robinson Crusoe's island is not, hedged about with self-conscious fictionality, strictly unfulfillable and nowhere to be found.

Let me now briefly summarize this attempt to rethink the rise of the novel. In order to overcome some deficiencies in the reigning model of what

this movement amounted to, I have isolated, as its central principle, two recurrent patterns of "double reversal." Naïve empiricism negates romance idealism, and is in turn negated by a more extreme skepticism and a more circumspect approach to truth. Progressive ideology subverts aristocratic ideology, and is in turn subverted by conservative ideology. It is in these double reversals, and in their conflation, that the novel is constituted as a dialectical unity of opposed parts, an achievement that is tacitly acknowledged by the gradual stabilization of "the novel" as a terminological and a conceptual category in eighteenth-century usage. But we have also been concerned with a pattern of historical reversal that is of broader dimension than this movement, and from whose more elevated perspective the conflicts that are defined by our double reversals may even appear to dissolve into unity. For as we have seen over and over again, the origins of the English novel entail the positing of a "new" generic category as a dialectical negation of a "traditional" dominance—the romance, the aristocracy—whose character still saturates, as an antithetical but constitutive force, the texture of the category by which it is in the process of being replaced.

Of course the very capacity of seventeenth-century narrative to model itself so self-consciously on established categories bespeaks a detachment sufficient to imagine them *as* categories, to parody and thence to supersede them. And with hindsight we may see that the early development of the novel is our great example of the way that the birth of genres results from a momentary negation of the present so intense that it attains the positive status of a new tradition. But at the "first instant" of this broader dialectical reversal, the novel has a definitional volatility, a tendency to dissolve into its antithesis, which encapsulates the dialectical nature of historical process itself at a critical moment in the emergence of the modern world.

I have argued that the volatility of the novel at this time is *analogous* to that of the middle class. But it is clear that in a certain sense, the emerging novel also has *internalized* the emergence of the middle class in its preoccupation with the problem of how virtue is signified. From time to time we can observe the distinct questions of virtue and truth being raised simultaneously by writers of the most diverse aims and formal commitments. At such times we sense that writers wish to "make something" of the analogous relation between these questions, if only through their tacit juxtaposition. And occasionally the analogy will even be explicitly asserted. In this way, questions of truth and virtue begin to seem not so much distinct problems, as versions or transformations of each other, distinct ways of formulating and propounding a fundamental problem of what might be called epistemological, sociological, and ethical "signification." And the essential unity of this problem is clear from the fact that progressive and conservative positions on questions of virtue have their obvious corollary positions with respect to questions of truth. What this means is that epistemological choices come to have ideological significance, and a given account of the nature of social reality implies a certain formal commitment and procedure. Moreover we may conceive these correlations of truth and virtue also in terms of narrative form and content, so that the way

the story is told, and what it is that is told, are implicitly understood to bear an integral relation to each other.

But I do not mean to suggest the conflation of questions of truth and virtue occurred easily or quickly. On the contrary, it is the result of much thought and experimentation, a very small portion of which I have described here, expended over a considerable period of time. And the conflation itself begins to occur when writers begin to act—first gingerly, then systematically—upon the insight that the difficulties of one set of problems may be mediated and illuminated by the reflection of the other. This insight—the deep and fruitful analogy between questions of truth and questions of virtue—is the enabling foundation of the novel. And the genre of the novel can be understood comprehensively as an early modern cultural instrument designed to confront, on the level of narrative form and content, both intellectual and social crisis simultaneously. The novel emerges into consciousness when this conflation can be made with complete confidence. The conflict then comes to be embodied in a public controversy between Richardson and Fielding—writers who are understood to represent coherent, autonomous, and alternative methods for doing the same thing. At this point—in the mid-1740s, after the first confrontation between Richardson and Fielding—the novel has come to the end of its origins. And it begins then to enter new territory.

Notes

1. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957). The present essay summarizes one central argument of my book *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

2. *The Annals of Love, Containing Select Histories of the Amours of divers Princes Courts, Pleasantly Related* (1672), sig. Dd7^v^ Ee4^v^. Except where noted, place of publication of early modern works is London.

3. *A Catalogue of The most vendible Books in England* . . . (1657).

4. *The History of the Royal-Society of London* . . . (1667), 90–91.

5. *Philosophical Transactions,* 11 (1676), 552.

6. See *Philosophical Transactions,* 1 (1665–66), 141–43, 186–89. Boyle's instructions are excerpted from his *Some Considerations of the Usefulness of Experimental Natural Philosophy* (1663).

7. *The History of the Royal-Society of London,* 72.

8. Awnsham and John Churchill, eds., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* . . . (1704), I, viii.

9. Edward Cooke, in ibid., II, xix.

10. See in general Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), ch. 2 and passim.

11. *Histories and Observations Domestick and Foreign* . . . (1683), sig. A5^v^, A6^r^.

12. E.g., see *Don Quixote,* II (1615), ii–iv.

13. See the discussion of William Haller, *The Elect Nation: The Meaning and Relevance of Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 122, 150–60, 213–14.

14. Bunyan, *Life and Death,* 326, sig. A4^v^.

15. *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby, FRS, Author of the Topography of Leeds (1677–1724),*

ed. Rev. Joseph Hunter (1830), I, xv, quoted in George A. Starr, *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 10.

16. *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* . . . (1691), sig. A4[r].

17. E.g., *A Discourse concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* . . . (1704).

18. *Tatler,* no. 178, May 27–30, 1710.

19. *Tatler,* no. 84, Oct. 22, 1709.

20. *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr Peter Bayle* (1697), 2d ed. (1734–38), IV, "Nidhard," n. C, 366.

21. *The Plus Ultra reduced to a Non Plus* . . . (1670), II.

22. See the copy of [Richard Head,] *O-Brazile, or the Inchanted Island* . . . (1675) reproduced in *Seventeenth-Century Tales of the Supernatural,* ed. Isabel M. Westcott, Augustan Reprint Society, no. 74 (1958).

23. "*Soliloquy:* or Advice to an Author" (1714), in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* 2d ed. (1714), I, 344.

24. [François Mission,] *A New Voyage to the East-Indies, by Francis Leguat and His Companions* . . . (London and Amsterdam, 1708), iv. The rival is the Abbot of Choisy.

25. See the discussion in David Cressy, "Describing the Social Order of Elizabethan and Stuart England," *Literature and History,* no. 3 (Mar. 1976), 29–44.

26. See Peter Matthias, "The Social Structure in the Eighteenth Century: A Calculation by Joseph Massie," in *The Transformation of England: Essays in the Economic and Social History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 176, 186, 188.

27. See Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), ch. 3. For a discussion of "status inconsistency" and reference-group theory in the context of seventeenth-century historiography, see Stone's *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529–1642* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), ch. 1.

28. A generalization based on the use of the term in dramatic contexts: see C. L. Barber, *The Idea of Honor in the English Drama, 1591–1700,* Gothenburg Studies in English, 6 (Göteberg: Elanders, 1957), 330–31.

29. *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), ed. Phillip Harth (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), "Remark (R)," 212–13.

30. *New Instruction to the Guardian* . . . (1694), 135–36.

31. *A Modest Plea for an Equal Common-wealth Against Monarchy* . . . (1659), 62–63.

32. *The True-Born Englishman. A Satyr* (1700), 70–71.

33. *The Compleat English Gentleman* (written 1728–29), ed. Karl D. Bülbring (London: David Nutt, 1890), 171.

34. *Examiner,* no. 40, May 10, 1711; (Irish) *Intelligencer,* no. 9 (1728).

35. *Examiner,* no. 34, Mar. 29, 1711.

36. *Review,* III, no. 126, Oct. 22, 1706.

37. "Answer to the Nineteen Propositions," June 18, 1642, in J. P. Kenyon, ed., *The Stuart Constitution 1603–1688: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 23.

38. See Gerald M. Straka, *Anglican Reaction to the Revolution of 1688,* State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962).

39. See *Charles II's Escape from Worcester: A Collection of Narratives Assembled by Samuel Pepys,* ed. William Matthews (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 40, 42, 44, 50, 74, 96.

40. To Suffolk County Committee, Aug. 29, Sept. 28, 1643, in *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell,* ed. Wilbur C. Abbott (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), I, 256, 262.

41. Quoted in Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 266.

42. Thomas Edwards, "The Holy Choice," in *Three Sermons* (1625), 63–64, quoted in ibid., 235.

43. See *Acts and Monuments,* ed. S. R. Cattley (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1839), VIII, 473–74.

44. See *The Isle of Pines* . . . (1668).

45. See "A Noble Mans Sute to a Cuntrie Maide," in *Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey, 1573–1580,* ed. Edward J. L. Scott, Camden Society, n. s. 33 (London: Nichols & Sons, 1884), 144–58.

46. See *The Fair Jilt: or, the History of Prince Tarquin, and Miranda* (1696), in *The Histories and Novels of the Late Ingenious Mrs. Behn* . . . (1696).

47. *The True Picture of a Modern Whig* . . . , "6th ed." (1701), 14, 32.

16

Fredric Jameson

From The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act

This book will argue the priority of the political interpretation of literary texts. It conceives of the political perspective not as some supplementary method, not as an optional auxiliary to other interpretive methods current today—the psychoanalytic or the myth-critical, the stylistic, the ethical, the structural—but rather as the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation.

This is evidently a much more extreme position than the modest claim, surely acceptable to everyone, that certain texts have social and historical—sometimes even political—resonance. Traditional literary history has, of course, never prohibited the investigation of such topics as the Florentine political background in Dante, Milton's relationship to the schismatics, or Irish historical allusions in Joyce. I would argue, however, that such information—even where it is not recontained, as it is in most instances, by an idealistic conception of the history of ideas—does not yield interpretation as such, but rather at best its (indispensable) preconditions.

Today this properly antiquarian relationship to the cultural past has a dialectical counterpart which is ultimately no more satisfactory; I mean the tendency of much contemporary theory to rewrite selected texts from the past in terms of its own aesthetic and, in particular, in terms of a modernist (or more properly post-modernist) conception of language. I have shown elsewhere[1] the ways in which such "ideologies of the text" construct a straw man or inessential term—variously called the "readerly" or the "realistic" or the "referential" text—over against which the essential term—the "writerly" or modernist or "open" text, *écriture* or textual productivity—is defined and with which it is seen as a decisive break. But Croce's great dictum that "all history is contemporary history" does not mean that all history is *our* contemporary history; and the problems begin when your epistemological break begins to displace itself in time according to your own current interests, so that Balzac may stand for unenlightened representationality when you are concerned to bring out everything that is "textual" and modern in Flaubert, but turns into something else when, with Roland Barthes in *S/Z,* you have decided to rewrite Balzac as Philippe Sollers, as sheer text and *écriture.*

This unacceptable option, or ideological double bind, between antiquarianism and modernizing "relevance" or projection demonstrates that the old dilemmas of historicism—and in particular, the question of the claims of monuments from distant and even archaic moments of the cultural past on a culturally different present[2]—do not go away just because we choose to ignore them. Our presupposition, in the analyses that follow, will be that only a genuine philosophy of history is capable of respecting the specificity and radical difference of the social and cultural past while disclosing the solidarity of its polemics and passions, its forms, structures, experiences, and struggles, with those of the present day.

But genuine philosophies of history have never been numerous, and few survive in workable, usable form in the contemporary world of consumer capitalism and the multinational system. We will have enough occasion, in the pages that follow, to emphasize the methodological interest of Christian historicism and the theological origins of the first great hermeneutic system in the Western tradition, to be permitted the additional observation that the Christian philosophy of history which emerges full blown in Augustine's *City of God* (A.D. 413–426) can no longer be particularly binding on us. As for the philosophy of history of a heroic bourgeoisie, its two principal variants—the vision of progress that emerges from the ideological struggles of the French Enlightenment, and that organic populism or nationalism which articulated the rather different historicity of the central and Eastern European peoples and which is generally associated with the name of Herder—are neither of them extinct, certainly, but are at the very least both discredited under their hegemonic embodiments in positivism and classical liberalism, and in nationalism respectively.

My position here is that only Marxism offers a philosophically coherent and ideologically compelling resolution to the dilemma of historicism evoked above. Only Marxism can give us an adequate account of the essential *mystery* of the cultural past, which, like Tiresias drinking the blood, is momentarily returned to life and warmth and allowed once more to speak, and to deliver its long-forgotten message in surroundings utterly alien to it. This mystery can be reenacted only if the human adventure is one; only thus—and not through the hobbies of antiquarianism or the projections of the modernists—can we glimpse the vital claims upon us of such long-dead issues as the seasonal alternation of the economy of a primitive tribe, the passionate disputes about the nature of the Trinity, the conflicting models of the *polis* or the universal Empire, or, apparently closer to us in time, the dusty parliamentary and journalistic polemics of the nineteenth-century nation states. These matters can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story; only if, in however disguised and symbolic a form, they are seen as sharing a single fundamental theme—for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity;[3] only if they are grasped as vital episodes in a single vast unfinished plot: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles: freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman—in a word, oppressor and oppressed—stood in constant opposition to

one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes."[4] It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity.

From this perspective the convenient working distinction between cultural texts that are social and political and those that are not becomes something worse than an error: namely, a symptom and a reinforcement of the reification and privatization of contemporary life. Such a distinction reconfirms that structural, experiential, and conceptual gap between the public and the private, between the social and the psychological, or the political and the poetic, between history or society and the "individual," which—the tendential law of social life under capitalism—maims our existence as individual subjects and paralyzes our thinking about time and change just as surely as it alienates us from our speech itself. To imagine that, sheltered from the omnipresence of history and the implacable influence of the social, there already exists a realm of freedom—whether it be that of the microscopic experience of words in a text or the ecstasies and intensities of the various private religions—is only to strengthen the grip of Necessity over all such blind zones in which the individual subject seeks refuge, in pursuit of a purely individual, a merely psychological, project of salvation. The only effective liberation from such constraint begins with the recognition that there is nothing that is not social and historical—indeed, that everything is "in the last analysis" political.

The assertion of a political unconscious proposes that we undertake just such a final analysis and explore the multiple paths that lead to the unmasking of cultural artifacts as socially symbolic acts. It projects a rival hermeneutic to those already enumerated; but it does so, as we shall see, not so much by repudiating their findings as by arguing its ultimate philosophical and methodological priority over more specialized interpretive codes whose insights are strategically limited as much by their own situational origins as by the narrow or local ways in which they construe or construct their objects of study.

Still, to describe the readings and analyses contained in the present work as so many *interpretations,* to present them as so many exhibits in the construction of a new *hermeneutic,* is already to announce a whole polemic program, which must necessarily come to terms with a critical and theoretical climate variously hostile to these slogans.[5] It is, for instance, increasingly clear that hermeneutic or interpretive activity has become one of the basic polemic targets of contemporary post-structuralism in France, which—powerfully buttressed by the authority of Nietzsche—has tended to identify such operations with historicism, and in particular with the dialectic and its valorization of absence and the negative, its assertion of the necessity and priority of totalizing thought. I will agree with this identification, with this description of the ideological affinities and implications of the ideal of the interpretive or hermeneutic act; but I will argue that the critique is misplaced.

Indeed, one of the most dramatic of such recent attacks on interpretation—*The Anti-Oedipus,* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari—quite prop-

erly takes as its object not Marxian, but rather Freudian, interpretation, which is characterized as a reduction and a rewriting of the whole rich and random multiple realities of concrete everyday experience into the contained, strategically pre-limited terms of the family narrative—whether this be seen as myth, Greek tragedy, "family romance," or even the Lacanian structural version of the Oedipus complex. What is denounced is therefore a system of allegorical interpretation in which the data of one narrative line are radically impoverished by their rewriting according to the paradigm of another narrative, which is taken as the former's master code or Ur-narrative and proposed as the ultimate hidden or unconscious *meaning* of the first one. The thrust of the argument of the *Anti-Oedipus* is, to be sure, very much in the spirit of the present work, for the concern of its authors is to reassert the specificity of the political content of everyday life and of individual fantasy-experience and to reclaim it from that reduction to the merely subjective and to the status of psychological projection which is even more characteristic of American cultural and ideological life today than it is of a still politicized France. My point in mentioning this example is to observe that the repudiation of an older interpretive system—Freudian rewriting, overhastily assimilated to hermeneutics in general and as such—is in *The Anti-Oedipus* coupled with the projection of a whole new method for the reading of texts:

> The unconscious poses no problem of meaning, solely problems of use. The question posed by desire is not "What does it mean?" but rather "*How does it work?*" . . . [The unconscious] represents nothing, but it produces. It means nothing, but it works. Desire makes its entry with the general collapse of the question "What does it mean?" No one has been able to pose the problem of language except to the extent that linguists and logicians have first eliminated meaning; and the greatest force of language was only discovered once a *work* was viewed as a machine, producing certain effects, amenable to a certain use. Malcolm Lowry says of his work: it's anything you want it to be, so long as it works—"It works too, believe me, as I have found out"—a machinery. But on condition that meaning be nothing other than use, that it become a firm principle only if we have at our disposal *immanent criteria* capable of determining the legitimate uses, as opposed to the illegitimate ones that relate use instead to a hypothetical meaning and re-establish a kind of transcendence.[6]

From our present standpoint, however, the ideal of an immanent analysis of the text, of a dismantling or deconstruction of its parts and a description of its functioning and malfunctioning, amounts less to a wholesale nullification of all interpretive activity than to a demand for the construction of some new and more adequate, immanent or antitranscendent hermeneutic model, which it will be the task of the following pages to propose.[7]

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When we look at the practice of contemporary genre criticism, we find two seemingly incompatible tendencies at work, which we will term the *semantic* and the *syntactic* or structural, respectively, and which can conveniently be illustrated by traditional theories of comedy. For a first group, the object of

study is less the individual comic text than some ultimate comic vision of which the texts of Molière, Aristophanes, Joyce, and Rabelais offer so many embodiments. Accounts of such a vision, to be sure, seem to oscillate between the repressive and the liberatory; thus for Bergson comedy has the function of preserving social norms by castigating deviancy with ridicule, while for Emil Staiger the comic serves to make the fundamental absurdity of human existence tolerable. Such approaches, whatever their content, aim to describe the essence or meaning of a given genre by way of the reconstruction of an imaginary entity—the "spirit" of comedy or tragedy, the melodramatic or epic "world view," the pastoral "sensibility" or the satiric "vision"—which is something like the generalized existential experience behind the individual texts. In what follows we will take Frye's work as the richest idiosyncratic elaboration of such an approach, for which genre is essentially apprehended as a *mode.*

The second, syntactic approach to genre, which condemns the semantic option as intuitive and impressionistic, proposes rather to analyze the mechanisms and structure of a genre such as comedy, and to determine its laws and its limits. Analyses of this kind, which range from the lost chapters of Aristotle's *Poetics* to Freud's joke book, aim less at discovering the meaning of the generic mechanism or process than at constructing its model. The two approaches are thus no mere inversions of each other, but are fundamentally incommensurable, as may be judged from the fact that each projects a quite distinct dialectical opposite or negation. For the semantic or phenomenological approach, the contrary in terms of which comedy will be defined always proves to be another mode: tragedy, say, or irony. For structural analyses, the "opposite" of comedy will simply be the noncomic or the unfunny, the joke that falls flat or the farce that remains a dead letter. Our basic text for this second approach to the generic problem will be Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale,* where genre is apprehended in terms of a series of determinate functions, or what we will call a structure or a *fixed form.*

It will have become evident that these two approaches correspond to what, in our first chapter, has been described as the rivalry between old-fashioned "interpretation," which still asks the text what it *means,* and the newer kinds of analysis which, according to Deleuze, ask how it *works.* Yet similar methodological hesitations and alternations in stylistics and in the history of linguistics suggest that we can now locate the source of such antinomies in the very nature of language, which, uniquely ambiguous, both subject and object all at once, or in Humboldt's terms, both *energeia* and *ergon,* intentional meaning and articulated system, necessarily projects two distinct and discontinuous dimensions (or "objects of study") which can never be conceptually unified.[8] We assume that the objective source of these twin projections, language, is somehow a unified phenomenon. Unfortunately, as the burden of Wittgenstein's later work teaches, any attempt prematurely to think it as such—in the form of Language—always reifies it. Thus, our meditation on language must henceforth take the mediatory path of the separate specialized disciplines which each of these perspectives on language has generated: logic and linguistics, semantics and grammar, phenomenology and semiotics.

This situation apparently condemns genre theory to a methodological

double standard, an unavoidable shifting of gears between two irreconcilable options. At best, it would seem, we can make a virtue of necessity, and turn the problem into a relatively sterile hypothesis about the dual nature of genre; the latter would then be defined as that literary discourse which may be examined either in terms of a fixed form or in terms of a mode, but which *must* be susceptible of study from both these perspectives optionally.

In reality, however, this disappointing hypothesis marks a first step forward on the project of this chapter, which is, by rethinking both these interpretive methods dialectically, to historicize their findings, so as, thereby, not merely to gain some sense of the ideological significance and historical destiny of romance as a genre, but, beyond that, to get some feeling for the dialectical use of generic literary history as such.

Dialectical thinking can be characterized as historical reflexivity, that is, as the study of an object (here the romance texts) which also involves the study of the concepts and categories (themselves historical) that we necessarily bring to the object. In the present case these categories have already been described as the semantic and structural approaches. But how do you go about "historicizing" such mental categories or conceptual operations? A first step in this direction has been taken when you come to understand that they are not the result of purely philosophic choices or options in the void, but are objectively determined: and this is what has happened when we come to understand that the apparently philosophical alternative between the two "methods" was in reality the projection of objective antinomies in language.

Now we need to make a further step, which we can call the de-positivizing of these two positions. Every universalizing approach, whether the phenomenological or the semiotic, will from the dialectical point of view be found to conceal its own contradictions and repress its own historicity by strategically framing its perspective so as to omit the negative, absence, contradiction, repression, the *non-dit,* or the *impensé.* To restore the latter requires that abrupt and paradoxical dialectical restructuration of the basic problematic which has often seemed to be the most characteristic gesture and style of dialectical method in general, keeping the terms but standing the problem on its head. So we will show in what follows that Frye's entire discussion of romance turns on a presupposition—the ethical axis of good and evil—which needs to be historically problematized in its turn, and which will prove to be an ideologeme that articulates a social and historical contradiction. An interrogation of Propp's method will, meanwhile, disclose that it is contradictory in its own terms, and fails to come to grips with the basic underlying problem of the *subject,* which it assumes as nonproblematical and as a given from the outset. The dialectical critique of these methods is, however, not a merely negative and destructive one; it leads, as we shall see, to their fulfillment and completion, albeit in a very different spirit from the one they initially propose.

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The question of some immanent, nonconceptual ideological function of romance as a "pure" narrative is . . . raised with a vengeance. Meanwhile, our problematization of Frye's use of these oppositions has allowed us to complete

his analysis in an unexpected and instructive way. We will therefore abstract the following working hypothesis: that the modal approach to genre must be pursued, until, by means of radical historicization, the "essence," "spirit," "world-view," in question is revealed to be an ideologeme, that is, a historically determinate conceptual or semic complex which can project itself variously in the form of a "value system" or "philosophical concept," or in the form of a protonarrative, a private or collective narrative fantasy.

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It would seem possible to perform this operation in a different way, by grasping the ideologeme, not as a mere reflex or reduplication of its situational context, but as the imaginary resolution of the objective contradictions to which it thus constitutes an active response. It is clear, for instance, that the positional notion of good and evil so central to romance narrative is not unique to this form alone, but also characterizes the *chanson de geste* from which romance emerged, as well as popular forms such as the American Western with which both have so much in common.[9] Such kinships suggest that this positional thinking has an intimate relationship to those historical periods sometimes designated as the "time of troubles," in which central authority disappears and marauding bands of robbers and brigands range geographical immensities with impunity: this is certainly true of the late Carolingian period, when a population terrorized by barbarian incursions increasingly withdrew into the shelter of local fortresses.

When, in the twelfth century, this kind of social and spatial isolation was overcome, and the feudal nobility became conscious of itself as a universal class or "subject of history," newly endowed with a codified ideology,[10] there must arise what can only be called a contradiction between the older positional notion of good and evil, perpetuated by the *chanson de geste,* and this emergent class solidarity. Romance in its original strong form may then be understood as an imaginary "solution" to this real contradiction, a symbolic answer to the perplexing question of how my enemy can be thought of as being *evil* (that is, as other than myself and marked by some absolute difference), when what is responsible for his being so characterized is quite simply the *identity* of his own conduct with mine, the which—points of honor, challenges, tests of strength—he reflects as in a mirror image.

Romance "solves" this conceptual dilemma by producing a new kind of narrative, the "story" of something like a semic evaporation. The hostile knight, in armor, his identity unknown, exudes that insolence which marks a fundamental refusal of recognition and stamps him as the bearer of the category of evil, up to the moment when, defeated and unmasked, he asks for mercy by *telling his name:* "Sire, Yidiers, li filz Nut, ai non" (*Erec et Enide,* 1042), at which point, reinserted into the unity of the social class, he becomes one more knight among others and loses all his sinister unfamiliarity. This moment, in which the antagonist ceases to be a villain, distinguishes the romance narrative from those of *chanson de geste* and the Western at the same time that it raises a new and productive dilemma for the future development and adaptation of this form. For now that the "experience" or the seme of evil

can no longer be permanently assigned or attached to this or that human agent, it must find itself expelled from the realm of interpersonal or innerworldly relations in a kind of Lacanian *forclusion* and thereby be projectively reconstituted into a free-floating and disembodied element, a baleful optical illusion, in its own right: that "realm" of sorcery and magical forces which constitutes the semic organization of the "world" of romance and henceforth determines the provisional investment of its anthropomorphic bearers and its landscapes alike. With this development, something like a history of the form may be said already to have begun.

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With these twin [through readings of Frye and Vladimir Propp] reopenings upon history of our two approaches to genre, we are now in a better position to evaluate Frye's notion of generic history, which he describes in terms of the displacement of romance from one mimetic level or "style" (high, low, mixed) to another. Transformations in the status of the hero ("superior in *kind* both to other men and to the environment of other men," "superior in *degree* to other men and to his environment," "superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment," "superior neither to other men nor to his environment," "inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves"[11]) signal a modulation from some "original" solar myth, through the levels of romance, epic and tragedy, comedy and realism, to that of the demonic and ironic, of the contemporary antihero, whence, as at the end of Vico or of the *Inferno* ("lasciò qui loco vòto / quella ch'appar di qua, e sù ricorse") the whole storytelling system rotates on its axis and the original solar myth reappears. In this sense, *The Secular Scripture* is itself the strongest contemporary renewal of romance, and may be added into its own corpus in much the same way that Lévi-Strauss has suggested that all later interpretations of the Oedipus myth (including Freud's) be understood as variants on the basic text.

I have suggested elsewhere[12] that, despite the use of the Freudian concept of displacement, with its negative implications (repression, distortion, negation, and the like), the driving force of Frye's system is the idea of historical *identity:* his identification of mythic patterns in modern texts aims at reinforcing our sense of the affinity between the cultural present of capitalism and the distant mythical past of tribal societies, and at awakening a sense of the continuity between our psychic life and that of primitive peoples. Frye's is in this sense a "positive" hermeneutic, which tends to filter out historical difference and the radical discontinuity of modes of production and of their cultural expressions. A negative hermeneutic, then, would on the contrary wish to use the narrative raw material shared by myth and "historical" literatures to sharpen our sense of historical difference, and to stimulate an increasingly vivid apprehension of what happens when plot falls into history, so to speak, and enters the force fields of the modern societies.

From this point of view, then, the problem raised by the persistence of romance as a mode is that of substitutions, adaptations, and appropriations, and raises the question of what, under wholly altered historical circumstances, can have been found to replace the raw materials of magic and Otherness

which medieval romance found ready to hand in its socioeconomic environment. A history of romance as a mode becomes possible, in other words, when we explore the substitute codes and raw materials, which, in the increasingly secularized and rationalized world that emerges from the collapse of feudalism, are pressed into service to replace the older magical categories of Otherness which have now become so many dead languages.

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Let us now look . . . at [the] type of construction which we will designate as a model of formal *sedimentation,* and whose essential theory we owe to Edmund Husserl.[13] To limit ourselves to generic problems, what this model implies is that in its emergent, strong form a genre is essentially a socio-symbolic message, or in other terms, that form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right. When such forms are reappropriated and refashioned in quite different social and cultural contexts, this message persists and must be functionally reckoned into the new form. The history of music provides the most dramatic examples of this process, wherein folk dances are transformed into aristocratic forms like the minuet (as with the pastoral in literature), only then to be reappropriated for new ideological (and nationalizing) purposes in romantic music; or even more decisively when an older polyphony, now coded as archaic, breaks through the harmonic system of high romanticism. The ideology of the form itself, thus sedimented, persists into the later, more complex structure as a generic message which coexists—either as a contradiction or, on the other hand, as a mediatory or harmonizing mechanism—with elements from later stages.

This notion of the text as a synchronic unity of structurally contradictory or heterogeneous elements, generic patterns and discourses (what we may call, following Ernst Bloch, the *Ungleichzeitigkeit* or synchronic "uneven development" within a single textual structure[14]) now suggests that even Frye's notion of displacement can be rewritten as a conflict between the older deep-structural form and the contemporary materials and generic systems in which it seeks to inscribe and to reassert itself. Beyond this, it would seem to follow that, properly used, genre theory must always in one way or another project a model of the coexistence or tension between several generic modes or strands: and with this methodological axiom the typologizing abuses of traditional genre criticism are definitely laid to rest.

It has perhaps already become clear that traditional generic systems—tragedy and comedy, for instance, or lyric/epic/drama—which in earlier social formations have their own objectivity and constitute something like a formal environment or historical situation into which the individual work must emerge and against which it must define itself, are for the contemporary critic the occasion for the stimulation of essentially differential perceptions. On such occasions, even if the critic "classes" the text as a whole in this or that traditional genus, as a romance, say, rather than a comedy, the thrust of such a decision is to define the specificity of this text and mode *against* the other genre, now grasped in dialectical opposition to it. So to define romance in terms of wish-fulfillment, as Frye does, is already implicitly or explicitly to

stage a comparative analysis in which this form is systematically differentiated from comedy, which is clearly also a wish-fulfilling narrative structure. The materials of comedy, however, are not the ethical oppositions and magical forces of its generic opposite, but rather those of the Oedipal situation, with its tyrannical fathers, its rebellious younger generation, and its renewal of the social order by marriage and sexual fulfillment. Comedy is active and articulates the play of desire and of the obstacles to it, whereas romance develops, as we have seen, under the sign of destiny and providence, and takes as its outer horizon the transformation of a whole world, ultimately sealed by those revelations of which the enigmatic Grail is itself the emblem. Comedy is social in its ultimate perspective, whereas romance remains metaphysical; and the wish-fulfillments of comedy may be identified as those of the genital stage, whereas romance would seem to betray older, more archaic fantasy material and to reenact the oral stage, its anxieties (the baleful spell of the intruding father-magician-villain) and its appeasement (the providential vision), reawakening the more passive and symbiotic relationship of infant to mother. Yet such psychoanalytic readings, although perfectly appropriate, should not be understood as diagnoses of these modes, but rather as new motifs and pretexts for a more thoroughgoing differential description of the two forms. In particular, the archaic fantasy material that psychoanalytic criticism feels able to detect in such forms can never be imagined as emerging in any pure state, but must always pass through a determinate social and historical situation, in which it is both universalized and reappropriated by "adult" ideology. The fantasy level of a text would then be something like the primal motor force which gives any cultural artifact its resonance, but which must always find itself diverted to the service of other, ideological functions, and reinvested by what we have called the political unconscious. We have indeed already observed such a process of ideological reappropriation at work in Eichendorff's novella, whatever its instinctual sources. In *Taugenichts,* the comic mode—the place of the father, of the obstacle to desire, but also of social contradiction—is systematically effaced by the generic discourse of magical phantasmagoria, with its quite different perspective of a providential or maternal harmony. But in the Germany of the Holy Alliance this instinctual compromise is also an ideologically symbolic act.

When we have to do, however, with those eclectic, omnibus forms which are the monuments of nineteenth-century novelistic production, global classifications of a work in this or that traditional generic category at once become problematical. Is not, for instance, Manzoni's great work, far from being a romance, rather one of the supreme embodiments of what we call the historical novel? Or should it be seen as a late and unexpected avatar of the Byzantine novel, in which, as in the *Ethiopica* of Heliodorus, lovers are torn asunder by labyrinthine adventures and coincidences which ultimately reunite them? And are not Stendhal's novels far more easily ranged under the more traditional notion of the *Bildungsroman?* All these uncertainties and false problems are evidently generated by a "form"—the novel—which is not assimilable to either of the critical options of mode or of narrative structure.

Yet the eclecticism of the novel can itself become the occasion for a

different type of generic analysis. In *I Promessi Sposi,* for instance, the separation of the lovers allows Manzoni to write two very distinct narrative lines which can be read as two different generic modes. The plight of Lucia, for instance, gives him the material for a Gothic novel, in which the feminine victim eludes one trap only to fall into a more agonizing one, confronting villains of ever blacker nature, and providing the narrative apparatus for the development of a semic system of evil and redemption, and for a religious and psychological vision of the fate of the soul.

Meanwhile, Renzo wanders through the *grosse Welt* of history and of the displacement of vast armed populations, the realm of the destiny of peoples and the vicissitudes of their governments. His own episodic experiences, formally something like a *roman d'aventures,* the misadventures of a peasant Candide, thus provide a quite different narrative register from that, inward and psychologizing, of the Lucia narrative: the experience of social life as it comes to its moment of truth in the bread riots and the economic depression of Milan, the anarchy of the *bravi* and the incompetence of the state, and ultimately—going beyond history to those "acts of God" which govern it—the supreme event of the plague, and the rejuvenation of the land that follows. On this reading, then, the "novel" as an apparently unified form is subjected to a kind of x-ray technique designed to reveal the layered or marbled structure of the text according to what we will call *generic discontinuities.* The novel is then not so much an organic unity as a symbolic act that must reunite or harmonize hetereogeneous narrative paradigms which have their own specific and contradictory ideological meaning. It is at any rate the systematic interweaving of these two distinct generic modes—in later bourgeois society they will be definitively sundered from each other in the sealed compartments of the private and the public, the psychological and the social—which lends Manzoni's book an appearance of breadth and variety, and a totalizing "completeness," scarcely equaled elsewhere in world literature.

In Stendhal, such layering and internal discontinuity can more immediately be traced back to the coexistence of distinct and sedimented types of generic discourse, which are the "raw material" on which the novel as a process must work. The court material of *La Chartreuse,* centering around the principality of Parma and the personal power of the Duchess, derives from that literature of *mêmoires* and political gossip which has nourished the French tradition from Balzac to Proust and of which Saint-Simon remains the fountainhead and the monument. This is a generic discourse whose privileged content is the gesture, and more particularly its verbal manifestation in the *trait d'esprit,* and whose privileged form is the anecdote.

The story of Fabrice is, on the other hand, the exercise of a quite different generic or discursive register, which we have already characterized as that of introspection or of psychology in the specialized sense of the *idéologues* or of Stendhal's own book *De l'amour:* the articulation of the associative processes of the mind in what are essentially allegorical micronarratives. The Enlightenment rationality of this mode is itself a variant on the older analytic tradition of the seventeenth-century French *moralistes,* so that Stendhal's books—

mémoires plus moral epigrams—prove to reunite two relatively conventional strains and impulses in French classicism.

Such generic analysis thus tends to prolong its operations to the point at which the generic categories themselves—Gothic and picaresque, *mémoire* and associative psychology—are once more dissolved into the historical contradictions or the sedimented ideologemes in terms of which alone they are comprehensible. This final moment of the generic operation, in which the working categories of genre are themselves historically deconstructed and abandoned, suggests a final axiom, according to which *all* generic categories, even the most time-hallowed and traditional, are ultimately to be understood (or "estranged") as mere ad hoc, experimental constructs, devised for a specific textual occasion and abandoned like so much scaffolding when the analysis has done its work. This is in fact already obviously the case with the various generic classifications which people have invented for the novel (and of which we have given a few above: the *Bildungsroman,* the historical novel, the *roman d'aventures,* and the rest). Such classifications in fact prove rewarding only as long as they are felt to be relatively arbitrary critical acts, and lose their vitality when, as with the category of the *Bildungsroman,* they come to be thought of as "natural" forms. Genre criticism thereby recovers its freedom and opens up a new space for the creative construction of experimental entities, such as Lukács's reading of Solzhenitsyn in terms of an invented "genre" that might be termed the "closed laboratory situation,"[15] which project their "diachronic constructs" only the more surely to return to the synchronic historical situation in which such novels can be read as symbolic acts.

Notes

1. See "The Ideology of the Text," *Salmagundi,* (Fall 1975/Winter 1976), pp. 204–246.

2. This is to my mind the relevance of a theory of "modes of production" for literary and cultural criticism; see, for further reflections on this issue and a more explicit statement on the "historicist" tendencies of Marxism, my "Marxism and Historicism," *New Literary History,* 11 (Autumn, 1979), 41–73.

3. "The realm of freedom actually begins only where labor which is in fact determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized men, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis." Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York: International Publishers, 1977), III, 820.

4. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in K. Marx, *On Revolution,* ed. and trans. S. K. Padover (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), p. 81.

5. See Michel Foucault, "The Retreat and Return of the Origin," ch. 9, p. 6, of *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973), pp. 328–335; as well as the same author's *Archeology of Knowledge,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), in particular, the introduction and the chapter on the "history of ideas"; Jacques Derrida, "The Exorbitant. Question of Method," in *Of Grammatology,* trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 157–164; as well as his "Hors livre," in *La Dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 9–67; Jean Baudrillard, "Vers une critique de l'économie politique du signe," in *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972); along with his *Mirror of Production,* trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos, 1975); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus,* trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1977), pp. 25–28, 109–113, 305–308; Jean-François Lyotard, *Economie libidinale* (Paris: Minuit, 1974), esp. "Le Désir nommé Marx," pp. 117–188; and last but not least, Louis Althusser, et al., *Reading Capital,* trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1970), esp. "Marx's Immense Theoretical Revolution," pp. 182–193.

6. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus,* p. 109.

7. From the present perspective, in other words, Deleuze and Guattari's proposal for an *anti*interpretive method (which they call schizo-analysis) can equally well be grasped as a new hermeneutic in its own right. It is striking and noteworthy that most of the antiinterpretive positions enumerated in n. 5 above have felt the need to project new "methods" of this kind: thus, the archeology of knowledge, but also, more recently, the "political technology of the body" (Foucault), "grammatology" and deconstruction (Derrida), "symbolic exchange" (Baudrillard), libidinal economy (Lyotard), and "sémanalyse" (Julia Kristeva).

8. These two dimensions, and the methodological alternatives that accompany them, essentially correspond to what Voloshinov-Bakhtin calls the two tendencies or "two trends of thought in the philosophy of language": see *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,* trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 45–63.

9. And also that curious Brazilian "high literary" variant of the Western which is Guimarães Rosa's *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (trans. as *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* [New York: Knopf, 1963]).

10. Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society,* trans. L. A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 320ff.

11. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 33–34.

12. "Criticism in History," in Norman Rudich, ed., *Weapons of Criticism* (Palo Alto: Ramparts Press, 1976), pp. 38–40.

13. Husserl's principal illustration of this process—the constitution of Galilean science by way of a repression of praxis—is worth quoting at some length: "Now we must note something of the highest importance that occurred even as early as Galileo: the surreptitious substitution of the mathematically substructed world of idealities for the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable—our everyday life-world. This substitution was promptly passed on to his successors, the physicists of all the succeeding centuries.

"Galileo was himself an heir in respect to pure geometry. The inherited geometry, the inherited manner of 'intuitive' conceptualizing, proving, constructing, was no longer original geometry: in this sort of 'intuitiveness' it was already empty of meaning. Even ancient geometry was, in its way, *techne,* removed from the sources of truly immediate intuition and originally intuitive thinking, sources from which the so-called geo-

metrical intuition, i.e., that which operates with idealities, had at first derived its meaning. The geometry of idealities was preceded by the practical art of surveying, which knew nothing of idealities. Yet such a pregeometrical achievement was a meaning-fundament for geometry, a fundament for the great invention of idealization; the latter encompassed the invention of the ideal world of geometry, or rather the methodology of the objectifying determination of idealities through the constructions which create 'mathematical existence.' It was a fateful omission that Galileo did not inquire back into the original meaning-giving achievement which, as idealization practiced on the original ground of all theoretical and practical life—the immediately intuited world (and here especially the empirically intuited world of bodies)—resulted in the geometrical ideal constructions. He did not reflect closely on all this: on how the free, imaginative variation of this world and its shapes results only in possible empirically intuitable shapes and not in exact shapes; on what sort of motivation and what new achievement was required for genuinely geometric idealization. For in the case of the inherited geometrical method, these functions were no longer being *vitally* practiced; much less were they reflectively brought to theoretical consciousness as methods which realize the meaning of exactness from the inside. Thus it could appear that geometry, with its own immediately evident a priori 'intuition' and the thinking which operates with it, produces a self-sufficient, absolute truth which, as such—'obviously'—could be applied without further ado. That this obviousness was an illusion . . . , that even the meaning of the application of geometry has complicated sources: this remained hidden for Galileo and the ensuing period. Immediately with Galileo, then, begins the surreptitious substitution of idealized nature for prescientifically intuited nature" (Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology,* trans. David Carr [Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1970], pp. 48–49). Husserl's perception has now been grounded on a historically materialist basis by a remarkable book by Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Epistemology* (London: Macmillan, 1978). This work lays the philosophical basis for a theory of scientific abstraction in much the same way that Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* does for a theory of reification; its findings are here presupposed throughout.

14. Ernst Bloch, "Nonsynchronism and Dialectics," *New German Critique,* no. 11 (1977), pp. 22–38.

15. Georg Lukács, *Solzhenitsyn,* trans. W. D. Graf (Boston: MIT Press, 1969), pp. 35–46.

17

Benedict Anderson

From Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism

No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times.[1] To feel the force of this modernity one has only to imagine the general reaction to the busy-body who "discovered" the Unknown Soldier's name or insisted on filling the cenotaph with some real bones. Sacrilege of a strange, contemporary kind! Yet void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings.[2] (This is why so many different nations have such tombs without feeling any need to specify the nationality of their absent occupants. What else could they be *but* Germans, Americans, Argentinians . . . ?)

The cultural significance of such monuments becomes even clearer if one tries to imagine, say, a Tomb of the Unknown Marxist or a cenotaph for fallen Liberals. Is a sense of absurdity avoidable? The reason is that neither Marxism nor Liberalism are much concerned with death and immortality. If the nationalist imagining is so concerned, this suggests a strong affinity with religious imaginings. As this affinity is by no means fortuitous, it may be useful to begin a consideration of the cultural roots of nationalism with death, as the last of a whole gamut of fatalities.

If the manner of a man's dying usually seems arbitrary, his mortality is inescapable. Human lives are full of such combinations of necessity and chance. We are all aware of the contingency and ineluctability of our particular genetic heritage, our gender, our life-era, our physical capabilities, our mother-tongue, and so forth. The great merit of traditional religious worldviews (which naturally must be distinguished from their role in the legitimation of specific systems of domination and exploitation) has been their concern with man-in-the-cosmos, man as species being, and the contingency of life. The extraordinary survival over thousands of years of Buddhism, Christianity or Islam in dozens of different social formations attests to their imaginative

response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering—disease, mutilation, grief, age, and death. Why was I born blind? Why is my best friend paralyzed? Why is my daughter retarded? The religions attempt to explain. The great weakness of all evolutionary/progressive styles of thought, not excluding Marxism, is that such questions are answered with impatient silence.[3] At the same time, in different ways, religious thought also responds to obscure intimations of immortality, generally by transforming fatality into continuity (karma, original sin, etc.). In this way, it concerns itself with the links between the dead and the yet unborn, the mystery of re-generation. Who experiences *their* child's conception and birth without dimly apprehending a combined connectedness, fortuity, and fatality in a language of "continuity"? (Again, the disadvantage of evolutionary/progressive thought is an almost Heraclitean hostility to any idea of continuity.)

I bring up these perhaps simpleminded observations primarily because in Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought. The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning. As we shall see, few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation. If nation-states are widely conceded to be "new" and "historical," the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past,[4] and, still more important, glide into a limitless future. It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny. With Debray we might say, "Yes, it is quite accidental that I am born French; but after all, France is eternal."

Needless to say, I am not claiming that the appearance of nationalism toward the end of the eighteenth century was "produced" by the erosion of religious certainties, or that this erosion does not itself require a complex explanation. Nor am I suggesting that somehow nationalism historically "supersedes" religion. What I am proposing is that nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being.

For present purposes, the two relevant cultural systems are the *religious community* and the *dynastic realm.* For both of these, in their heydays, were taken-for-granted frames of reference, very much as nationality is today. It is therefore essential to consider what gave these cultural systems their self-evident plausibility, and at the same time to underline certain key elements in their decomposition.

The Religious Community

Few things are more impressive than the vast territorial stretch of the Ummah Islam from Morocco to the Sulu Archipelago, of Christendom from Paraguay to Japan, and of the Buddhist world from Sri Lanka to the Korean peninsula.

The great sacral cultures (and for our purposes here it may be permissible to include "Confucianism") incorporated conceptions of immense communities. But Christendom, the Ummah Islam, and even the Middle Kingdom—which, though we think of it today as Chinese, imagined itself not as Chinese, but as central—were imaginable largely through the medium of a sacred language and written script. Take only the example of Islam: if Maguindanao met Berbers in Mecca, knowing nothing of each other's languages, incapable of communicating orally, they nonetheless understood each other's ideographs, *because* the sacred texts they shared existed only in classical Arabic. In this sense, written Arabic functioned like Chinese characters to create a community out of signs, not sounds. (So today mathematical language continues an old tradition. Of what the Thai call +, Rumanians have no idea, and vice versa, but both comprehend the symbol.) All the great classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power. Accordingly, the stretch of written Latin, Pali, Arabic, or Chinese was, in theory, unlimited. (In fact, the deader the written language—the farther it was from speech—the better: in principle everyone has access to a pure world of signs.)

Yet such classical communities linked by sacred languages had a character distinct from the imagined communities of modern nations. One crucial difference was the older communities' confidence in the unique sacredness of their languages, and thus their ideas about admission to membership. Chinese mandarins looked with approval on barbarians who painfully learned to paint Middle Kingdom ideograms. These barbarians were already halfway to full absorption.[5] Half-civilized was vastly better than barbarian. Such an attitude was certainly not peculiar to the Chinese, nor confined to antiquity. Consider, for example, the following "policy on barbarians" formulated by the early-nineteenth-century Colombian liberal Pedro Fermín de Vargas:

> To expand our agriculture it would be necessary to hispanicize our Indians. Their idleness, stupidity, and indifference towards normal human endeavors causes one to think that they come from a degenerate race which deteriorates in proportion to the distance from its origin . . . *it would be very desirable that the Indians be extinguished, by miscegenation with the whites, declaring them free of tribute and other charges, and giving them private property in land.*[6]

How striking it is that this liberal still proposes to "extinguish" his Indians in part by "declaring them free of tribute" and "giving them private property in land," rather than exterminating them by gun and microbe as his heirs in Brazil, Argentina, and the United States began to do soon afterward. Note also, alongside the condescending cruelty, a cosmic optimism: the Indian is ultimately redeemable—by impregnation with white, "civilized" semen, and the acquisition of private property, *like everyone else.* (How different Fermín's attitude is from the later European imperialist's preference for "genuine" Malays, Gurkhas, and Hausas over "half-breeds," "semi-educated natives," "wogs," and the like.)

Yet if the sacred silent-languages were the media through which the great global communities of the past were imagined, the reality of such apparitions

depended on an idea largely foreign to the contemporary Western mind: the non-arbitrariness of the sign. The ideograms of Chinese, Latin, or Arabic were emanations of reality, not randomly fabricated representations of it. We are familiar with the long dispute over the appropriate language (Latin or vernacular) for the mass. In the Islamic tradition, until quite recently, the Qur'an was literally untranslatable (and therefore untranslated), because Allah's truth was accessible only through the unsubstitutable true signs of written Arabic. There is no idea here of a world so separated from language that all languages are equidistant (and thus interchangeable) signs for it. In effect, ontological reality is apprehensible only through a single, privileged system of re-presentation: the truth-language of Church Latin, Qur'anic Arabic, or Examination Chinese.[7] And, as truth-languages, imbued with an impulse largely foreign to nationalism, the impulse toward conversion. By conversion, I mean not so much the acceptance of particular religious tenets, but alchemic absorption. The barbarian becomes "Middle Kingdom," the Rif Muslim, the Ilongo Christian. The whole nature of man's being is sacrally malleable. (Contrast thus the prestige of these old world-languages, towering high over all vernaculars, with Esperanto or Volapük, which lie ignored between them.) It was, after all, this possibility of conversion through the sacred language that made it possible for an "Englishman" to become Pope[8] and a "Manchu" Son of Heaven.

But even though the sacred languages made such communities as Christendom imaginable, the actual scope and plausibility of these communities cannot be explained by sacred script alone: their readers were, after all, tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans.[9] A fuller explanation requires a glance at the relationship between the literati and their societies. It would be a mistake to view the former as a kind of theological technocracy. The languages they sustained, if abstruse, had none of the self-arranged abstruseness of lawyers' or economists' jargons, on the margin of society's idea of reality. Rather, the literati were adepts, strategic strata in a cosmological hierarchy of which the apex was divine.[10] The fundamental conceptions about "social groups" were centripetal and hierarchical, rather than boundary-oriented and horizontal. The astonishing power of the papacy in its noonday is only comprehensible in terms of a trans-European Latin-writing clerisy, *and* a conception of the world, shared by virtually everyone, that the bilingual intelligentsia, by mediating between vernacular and Latin, mediated between earth and heaven. (The awesomeness of excommunication reflects this cosmology.)

Yet for all the grandeur and power of the great religiously imagined communities, their *unselfconscious coherence* waned steadily after the late Middle Ages. Among the reasons for this decline, I wish here to emphasize only the two which are directly related to these communities' unique sacredness.

First was the effect of the explorations of the non-European world, which mainly, but by no means exclusively, in Europe "abruptly widened the cultural and geographic horizon and hence also men's conception of possible forms of human life."[11] The process is already apparent in the greatest of all European travel-books. Consider the following awed description of Kublai Khan by the good Venetian Christian Marco Polo at the end of the thirteenth century:[12]

> The grand khan, having obtained this signal victory, returned with great pomp and triumph to the capital city of Kanbalu. This took place in the month of November, and he continued to reside there during the months of February and March, in which latter was *our* festival of Easter. Being aware that this was one of *our* principal solemnities, he commanded all the Christians to attend him, and to bring with them *their* Book, which contains the four Gospels of the Evangelists. After causing it to be repeatedly perfumed with incense, in a ceremonious manner, he devoutly kissed it, and directed that the same should be done by all his nobles who were present. This was his usual practice upon each of the principal Christian festivals, such as Easter and Christmas; and he observed the same at the festivals of the Saracens, Jews, and idolaters. Upon being asked his motive for this conduct, he said: "There are four great Prophets who are reverenced and worshipped by the different classes of mankind. The Christians regard Jesus Christ as their divinity; the Saracens, Mahomet; the Jews, Moses; and the idolaters, Sogomombar-kan, the most eminent among their idols. I do honour and show respect to all the four, and invoke to my aid *whichever amongst them is in truth supreme in heaven.*" But from the manner in which his majesty acted towards them, it is evident that he regarded the faith of the Christians as the truest and the best.

What is so remarkable about this passage is not so much the great Mongol dynast's calm religious relativism (it is still a *religious* relativism), as Marco Polo's attitude and language. It never occurs to him, even though he is writing for fellow-European Christians, to term Kublai a hypocrite or an idolater. (No doubt in part because "in respect to number of subjects, extent of territory, and amount of revenue, he surpasses every sovereign that has heretofore been or that now is in the world.")[13] And in the unselfconscious use of "our" (which becomes "their"), and the description of the faith of the Christians as "truest," rather than "true," we can detect the seeds of a territorialization of faiths which foreshadows the language of many nationalists ("our" nation is "the best"—in a competitive, *comparative field*).

What a revealing contrast is provided by the opening of the letter written by the Persian traveler "Rica" to his friend "Ibben" from Paris in "1712":[14]

> The Pope is the chief of the Christians; he is an ancient idol, worshipped now from habit. Once he was formidable even to princes, for he would depose them as easily as our magnificent sultans depose the kings of Iremetia or Georgia. But nobody fears him any longer. He claims to be the successor of one of the earliest Christians, called Saint Peter, and it is certainly a rich succession, for his treasure is immense and he has a great country under his control.

The deliberate, sophisticated fabrications of the eighteenth-century Catholic mirror the naïve realism of his thirteenth-century predecessor, but by now the "relativization" and "territorialization" are utterly self-conscious, and political in intent. Is it unreasonable to see a paradoxical elaboration of this evolving tradition in the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's identification of The Great Satan, not as a heresy, nor even as a demonic personage (dim little Carter scarcely fitted the bill), but as a *nation*?

Second was a gradual demotion of the sacred language itself. Writing of medieval Western Europe, Bloch noted that "Latin was not only the language in which teaching was done, it was the *only language taught*."[15] (This second "only" shows quite clearly the sacredness of Latin—no other language was thought worth the teaching.) But by the sixteenth century all this was changing fast. The reasons for the change need not detain us here: the central importance of print-capitalism will be discussed below. It is sufficient to remind ourselves of its scale and pace. Febvre and Martin estimate that 77% of the books printed before 1500 were still in Latin (meaning nonetheless that 23% were already in vernaculars).[16] If of the 88 editions printed in Paris in 1501 all but 8 were in Latin, after 1575 a majority were always in French.[17] Despite a temporary come-back during the Counter-Reformation, Latin's hegemony was doomed. Nor are we speaking simply of a general popularity. Somewhat later, but at no less dizzying speed, Latin ceased to be the language of a pan-European high intelligentsia. In the seventeenth century Hobbes (1588–1678) was a figure of continental renown because he wrote in the truth-language. Shakespeare (1564–1616), on the other hand, composing in the vernacular, was virtually unknown across the Channel.[18] And had English not become, two hundred years later, the pre-eminent world-imperial language, might he not largely have retained his original insular obscurity? Meanwhile, these men's cross-Channel near-contemporaries, Descartes (1596–1650) and Pascal (1623–1662), conducted most of their correspondence in Latin; but virtually all of Voltaire's (1694–1778) was in the vernacular.[19] "After 1640, with fewer and fewer books coming out in Latin, and more and more in the vernacular languages, publishing was ceasing to be an international [sic] enterprise."[20] In a word, the fall of Latin exemplified a larger process in which the sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized.

The Dynastic Realm

These days it is perhaps difficult to put oneself empathetically into a world in which the dynastic realm appeared for most men as the only imaginable "political" system. For in fundamental ways "serious" monarchy lies transverse to all modern conceptions of political life. Kingship organizes everything around a high center. Its legitimacy derives from divinity, not from populations, who, after all, are subjects, not citizens. In the modern conception, state sovereignty is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimeter of a legally demarcated territory. But in the older imagining, where states were defined by centers, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another.[21] Hence, paradoxically enough, the ease with which pre-modern empires and kingdoms were able to sustain their rule over immensely heterogeneous, and often not even contiguous, populations for long periods of time.[22]

One must also remember that these antique monarchical states expanded not only by warfare but by sexual politics—of a kind very different from that practiced today. Through the general principle of verticality, dynastic marriages brought together diverse populations under new apices. Paradigmatic in this respect was the House of Habsburg. As the tag went, *Bella gerant alii*

tu felix Austria nube! Here, in somewhat abbreviated form, is the later dynasts' titulature:[23]

> Emperor of Austria; King of Hungary, of Bohemia, of Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia, Lodomeria, and Illyria; King of Jerusalem, etc.; Archduke of Austria [sic]; Grand Duke of Tuscany and Cracow; Duke of Loth[a]ringia, of Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Bukovina; Grand Duke of Transylvania, Margrave of Moravia; Duke of Upper and Lower Silesia, of Modena, Parma, Piacenza, and Guastella, of Ausschwitz and Sator, of Teschen, Friaul, Ragusa, and Zara; Princely Count of Habsburg and Tyrol, of Kyburg, Görz, and Gradiska; Duke of Trient and Brizen; Margrave of Upper and Lower Lausitz and in Istria; Count of Hohenembs, Feldkirch, Bregenz, Sonnenberg, etc.; Lord of Trieste, of Cattaro, and above the Windisch Mark; Great Voyvod of the Voyvodina, Servia. . . . etc.

This, Jászi justly observes, was "not without a certain comic aspect . . . the record of the innumerable marriages, hucksterings and captures of the Habsburgs."

In realms where polygyny was religiously sanctioned, complex systems of tiered concubinage were essential to the integration of the realm. In fact, royal lineages often derived their prestige, aside from any aura of divinity, from, shall we say, miscegenation?[24] For such mixtures were signs of a superordinate status. It is characteristic that there has not been an "English" dynasty ruling in London since the eleventh century (if then); and what "nationality" are we to assign to the Bourbons?[25]

During the seventeenth century, however—for reasons that need not detain us here—the automatic legitimacy of sacral monarchy began its slow decline in Western Europe. In 1649, Charles Stuart was beheaded in the first of the modern world's revolutions, and during the 1650s one of the more important European states was ruled by a plebeian Protector rather than a king. Yet even in the age of Pope and Addison, Anne Stuart was still healing the sick by the laying on of royal hands, cures committed also by the Bourbons, Louis XV and XVI, in Enlightened France till the end of the *ancien régime.*[26] But after 1789 the principle of Legitimacy had to be loudly and self-consciously defended, and, in the process, "monarchy" became a semi-standardized model. Tennō and Son of Heaven became "Emperors." In far-off Siam Rama V (Chulalongkorn) sent his sons and nephews to the courts of St. Petersburg, London, and Berlin to learn the intricacies of the world-model. In 1887, he instituted the requisite principle of succession-by-legal-primogeniture, thus bringing "Siam into line with the 'civilized' monarchies of Europe."[27] The new system brought to the throne in 1910 an erratic homosexual who would certainly have been passed over in an earlier age. However, inter-monarchic approval of his ascension as Rama VI was sealed by the attendance at his coronation of princelings from Britain, Russia, Greece, Sweden, Denmark—and Japan![28]

As late as 1914, dynastic states made up the majority of the membership of the world political system, but, as we shall be noting in detail below, many dynasts had for some time been reaching for a "national" cachet as the old principle of Legitimacy withered silently away. While the armies of Frederick the Great (r. 1740–1786) were heavily staffed by "foreigners," those of his great-nephew

Friedrich Wilhelm III (r. 1797–1840) were, as a result of Scharnhorst's, Gneisenau's and Clausewitz's spectacular reforms, exclusively "national-Prussian."[29]

Apprehensions of Time

It would be short-sighted, however, to think of the imagined communities of nations as simply growing out of and replacing religious communities and dynastic realms. Beneath the decline of sacred communities, languages and lineages, a fundamental change was taking place in modes of apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to "think" the nation.

To get a feeling for this change, one can profitably turn to the visual representations of the sacred communities, such as the reliefs and stained-glass windows of medieval churches, or the paintings of early Italian and Flemish masters. A characteristic feature of such representations is something misleadingly analogous to "modern dress." The shepherds who have followed the star to the manger where Christ is born bear the features of Burgundian peasants. The Virgin Mary is figured as a Tuscan merchant's daughter. In many paintings the commissioning patron, in full burgher or noble costume, appears kneeling in adoration alongside the shepherds. What seems incongruous today obviously appeared wholly natural to the eyes of medieval worshippers. We are faced with a world in which the figuring of imagined reality was overwhelmingly visual and aural. Christendom assumed its universal form through a myriad of specificities and particularities: this relief, that window, this sermon, that tale, this morality play, that relic. While the trans-European Latin-reading clerisy was one essential element in the structuring of the Christian imagination, the mediation of its conceptions to the illiterate masses, by visual and aural creations, always personal and particular, was no less vital. The humble parish priest, whose forebears and frailties everyone who heard his celebrations knew, was still the direct intermediary between his parishioners and the divine. This juxtaposition of the cosmic-universal and the mundane-particular meant that however vast Christendom might be, and was sensed to be, it manifested itself *variously* to particular Swabian or Andalusian communities as replications of themselves. Figuring the Virgin Mary with "Semitic" features or "first-century" costumes in the restoring spirit of the modern museum was unimaginable because the medieval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations between past and present.[30] Bloch observes that people thought they must be near the end of time, in the sense that Christ's second coming could occur at any moment: St. Paul had said that "the day of the Lord cometh like a thief in the night." It was thus natural for the great twelfth-century chronicler Bishop Otto of Freising to refer repeatedly to "we who have been placed at the end of time." Bloch concludes that as soon as medieval men "gave themselves up to meditation, nothing was farther from their thoughts than the prospect of a long future for a young and vigorous human race."[31]

Auerbach gives an unforgettable sketch of this form of consciousness:[32]

> If an occurrence like the sacrifice of Isaac is interpreted as prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ, so that in the former the latter is as it were announced and prom-

> ised and the latter "fulfills" . . . the former, then a connection is established between two events which are linked neither temporally nor causally—a connection which it is impossible to establish by reason in the horizontal dimension. . . . It can be established only if both occurrences are vertically linked to Divine Providence, which alone is able to devise such a plan of history and supply the key to its understanding . . . the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is *simultaneously* something which has always been, and will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal, something omnitemporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly event.

He rightly stresses that such an idea of *simultaneity* is wholly alien to our own. It views time as something close to what Benjamin calls Messianic time, a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present.[33] In such a view of things, the word "meanwhile" cannot be of real significance.

Our own conception of simultaneity has been a long time in the making, and its emergence is certainly connected, in ways that have yet to be well studied, with the development of the secular sciences. But it is a conception of such fundamental importance that, without taking it fully into account, we will find it difficult to probe the obscure genesis of nationalism. What has come to take the place of the medieval conception of simultaneity-along-time is, to borrow again from Benjamin, an idea of "homogeneous, empty time," in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar.[34]

Why this transformation should be so important for the birth of the imagined community of the nation can best be seen if we consider the basic structure of two forms of imagining which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper.[35] For these forms provided the technical means for "re-presenting" the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation.

Consider first the structure of the old-fashioned novel, a structure typical not only of the masterpieces of Balzac but also of any contemporary dollar-dreadful. It is clearly a device for the presentation of simultaneity in "homogeneous, empty time," or a complex gloss upon the word "meanwhile." Take, for illustrative purposes, a segment of a simple novel-plot, in which a man (A) has a wife (B) and a mistress (C), who in turn has a lover (D). We might imagine a sort of time-chart for this segment as follows:

Time:	I	II	III
Events:	A quarrels with B	A telephones C	D gets drunk in a bar
	C and D make love	B shops	A dines at home with B
		D plays pool	C has an ominous dream

Notice that during this sequence A and D never meet, indeed may not even be aware of each other's existence if C has played her cards right.[36] What then actually links A to D? Two complementary conceptions: First, that they are embedded in "societies" (Wessex, Lübeck, Los Angeles). These societies are

sociological entities of such firm and stable reality that their members (A and D) can even be described as passing each other on the street, without ever becoming acquainted, and still be connected.[37] Second, that A and D are *embedded in the minds of the omniscient readers.* Only they see the links. Only they, like God, watch A telephoning C, B shopping, and D playing pool all *at once.* That all these acts are performed at the same clocked, calendrical time, but by actors who may be largely unaware of one another, shows the novelty of this imagined world conjured up by the author in his readers' minds.[38]

The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history.[39] An American will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 240,000,000-odd fellow-Americans. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity.

The perspective I am suggesting will perhaps seem less abstract if we turn to inspect briefly four fictions from different cultures and different epochs, all but one of which, nonetheless, are inextricably bound to nationalist movements. In 1887, the "Father of Filipino Nationalism," José Rizal, wrote the novel *Noli Me Tangere,* which today is regarded as the greatest achievement of modern Filipino literature. It was also almost the first novel written by an "Indio."[40] Here is how it marvelously begins:[41]

> Don Santiago de los Santos was giving a dinner party one evening towards the end of October in the 1880's. Although, contrary to his usual practice, he had let it be known only on the afternoon of the same day, it was soon the topic of conversation in Binondo, where he lived, in other districts of Manila, and even in the Spanish walled city of Intramuros. Don Santiago was better known as Capitan Tiago—the rank was not military but political, and indicated that he had once been the native mayor of a town. In those days he had a reputation for lavishness. It was well known that his house, like his country, never closed its doors—except, of course, to trade and any idea that was new or daring.
>
> So the news of his dinner party ran like an electric shock through the community of spongers, hangers-on and gate-crashers whom God, in His infinite wisdom, had created and so fondly multiplied in Manila. Some of these set out to hunt polish for their boots; others, collar-buttons and cravats; but one and all gave the gravest thought to the manner in which they might greet their host with the assumed intimacy of long-standing friendship, or, if the occasion should arise, make a graceful apology for not having arrived earlier where presumably their presence was so eagerly awaited.
>
> The dinner was being given in a house on Anloague Street which may still be recognized unless it has tumbled down in some earthquake. Certainly it will not have been pulled down by its owner; in the Philippines, that is usually left to God and Nature. In fact, one often thinks that they are under contract to the Government for just that purpose.

Extensive comment is surely unnecessary. It should suffice to note that right from the start the image (wholly new to Filipino writing) of a dinner-party

being discussed by hundreds of unnamed people, who do not know each other, in quite different quarters of Manila, in a particular month of a particular decade immediately conjures up the imagined community. And in the phrase "a house on Anloague Street which may still be recognized" the recognizers are we-the-Filipino-readers. The casual progression of this house from the "interior" time of the novel to the "exterior" time of the [Manila] reader's everyday life gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community, embracing characters, author and readers, moving onward through calendrical time. Notice too the tone. While Rizal has not the faintest idea of his readers' individual identities, he writes to them with an ironical intimacy, as though their relationships with each other are not to the smallest degree problematic.[42]

Nothing gives one a more Foucaultian sense of abrupt discontinuities of consciousness than to compare *Noli* with the most celebrated previous literary work by an "Indio," Francisco Baltazar's *Pinagdaanang Buhay ni Florante at ni Laura sa Cahariang Albania* [The Story of Florante and Laura in the Kingdom of Albania], the first printed edition of which dates from 1861, though it may have been composed as early as 1838.[43] For although Baltazar was still alive when Rizal was born, the world of his masterpiece is in every basic respect foreign to that of *Noli.* Its setting—a fabulous medieval Albania—is utterly removed in time and space from the Binondo of the 1880s. Its heroes—Florante, a Christian Albanian nobleman, and his bosom-friend Aladin, a Muslim ("Moro") Persian aristocrat—remind us of the Philippines only by the Christian-Moro linkage. Where Rizal deliberately sprinkles his Spanish prose with Tagalog words for "realistic," satirical, or nationalist effect, Baltazar unselfconsciously mixes Spanish phrases into his Tagalog quatrains simply to heighten the grandeur and sonority of his diction. *Noli* was meant to be read, while *Florante at Laura* was to be sung aloud. Most striking of all is Baltazar's handling of time. As Lumbera notes, "the unravelling of the plot does not follow a chronological order. The story begins *in medias res,* so that the complete story comes to us through a series of speeches that serve as flashbacks."[44] Almost half of the 399 quatrains are accounts of Florante's childhood, student years in Athens, and subsequent military exploits, given by the hero in conversation with Aladin.[45] The "spoken flashback" was for Baltazar the only alternative to a straightforward single-file narrative. If we learn of Florante's and Aladin's "simultaneous" pasts, they are connected by their conversing voices, not by the structure of the epic. How distant this technique is from that of the novel: "In that same spring, while Florante was still studying in Athens, Aladin was expelled from his sovereign's court." In effect, it never occurs to Baltazar to "situate" his protagonists in "society," or to discuss them with his audience. Nor, aside from the mellifluous flow of Tagalog polysyllables, is there much "Filipino" about his text.[46]

In 1816, seventy years before the writing of *Noli,* José Joaquín Fernandez de Lizardi wrote a novel called *El Periquillo Sarniento* [The Itching Parrot], evidently the first Latin American work in this genre. In the words of one critic, this text is "a ferocious indictment of Spanish administration in Mexico: ignorance, superstition and corruption are seen to be its most notable charac-

teristics."[47] The essential form of this "nationalist" novel is indicated by the following description of its content:[48]

> From the first, [the hero, the Itching Parrot] is exposed to bad influences—ignorant maids inculcate superstitions, his mother indulges his whims, his teachers either have no vocation or no ability to discipline him. And though his father is an intelligent man who wants his son to practice a useful trade rather than swell the ranks of lawyers and parasites, it is Periquillo's over-fond mother who wins the day, sends her son to university and thus ensures that he will learn only superstitious nonsense. . . . Periquillo remains incorrigibly ignorant despite many encounters with good and wise people. He is unwilling to work or take anything seriously and becomes successively a priest, a gambler, a thief, apprentice to an apothecary, a doctor, clerk in a provincial town. . . . These episodes *permit the author to describe hospitals, prisons, remote villages, monasteries,* while at the same time driving home one major point—that Spanish government and the education system encourage parasitism and laziness. . . . Periquillo's adventures several times take him among Indians and Negroes.

Here again we see the "national imagination" at work in the movement of a solitary hero through a sociological landscape of a fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside. This picaresque *tour d'horison*—hospitals, prisons, remote villages, monasteries, Indians, Negroes—is nonetheless nor a *tour du monde.* The horizon is clearly bounded: it is that of colonial Mexico. Nothing assures us of this sociological solidity more than the succession of plurals. For they conjure up a social space full of *comparable* prisons, none in itself of any unique importance, but all representative (in their simultaneous, separate existence) of the oppressiveness of *this* colony.[49] (Contrast prisons in the Bible. They are never imagined as *typical* of this or that society. Each, like the one where Salome was bewitched by John the Baptist, is magically alone.)

Finally, to remove the possibility that, since Rizal and Lizardi both wrote in Spanish, the frameworks we have been studying are somehow "European," here is the opening of *Semarang Hitam* [Black Semarang], a tale by the ill-fated young Indonesian communist-nationalist Mas Marco Kartodikromo,[50] published serially in 1924:[51]

> *It was 7 o'clock, Saturday evening;* young people in Semarang never stayed at home on Saturday night. On this night however nobody was about. Because the heavy day-long rain had made the roads wet and very slippery, all had stayed at home.
>
> For the workers in shops and offices Saturday morning was a time of anticipation—anticipating their leisure and the fun of walking around the city in the evening, but on this night they were to be disappointed—because of lethargy caused by the bad weather and the sticky roads in the kampungs. The main roads usually crammed with all sorts of traffic, the footpaths usually teeming with people, all were deserted. Now and then the crack of a horse-cab's whip could be heard spurring a horse on its way—or the clip-clop of horses' hooves pulling carriages along.

> Semarang was deserted. The light from the rows of gas lamps shone straight down on the shining asphalt road. Occasionally the clear light from the gas lamps was dimmed as the wind blew from the east. . . .
>
> A young man was seated on a long rattan lounge reading a newspaper. He was totally engrossed. His occasional anger and at other times smiles were a sure sign of his deep interest in the story. He turned the pages of the newspaper, thinking that perhaps he could find something that would stop him feeling so miserable. All of a sudden he came upon an article entitled:
>
> PROSPERITY
>
> A destitute vagrant became ill and died on the side of the road from exposure.
>
> The young man was moved by this brief report. He could just imagine the suffering of the poor soul as he lay dying on the side of the road. . . . One moment he felt an explosive anger well up inside. Another moment he felt pity. Yet another moment his anger was directed at the social system which gave rise to such poverty, while making a small group of people wealthy.

Here, as in *El Periquillo Sarniento,* we are in a world of plurals: shops, offices, carriages, kampungs, and gas lamps. As in the case of *Noli,* we-the-Indonesian-readers are plunged immediately into calendrical time and a familiar landscape; some of us may well have walked those "sticky" Semarang roads. Once again, a solitary hero is juxtaposed to a socioscape described in careful, *general* detail. But there is also something new: a hero who is never named, but who is consistently referred to as "*our* young man." Precisely the clumsiness and literary naïveté of the text confirm the unselfconscious "sincerity" of this pronominal adjective. Neither Marco nor his readers have any doubts about the reference. If in the jocular-sophisticated fiction of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe the trope "our hero" merely underlines an authorial play with a(ny) reader, Marco's "our young man," not least in its novelty, *means* a young man who belongs to the collective body of readers of *Indonesian,* and thus, implicitly, an embryonic Indonesian "imagined community." Notice that Marco feels no need to specify this community by name: it is already there. (Even if polylingual Dutch colonial censors could join his readership, they are excluded from this "ourness," as can be seen from the fact that the young man's anger is directed at "the," not "our," social system.)

Finally, the imagined community is confirmed by the doubleness of our reading about our young man reading. He does not find the corpse of the destitute vagrant by the side of a sticky Semarang road, but imagines it from the print in a newspaper.[52] Nor does he care the slightest who the dead vagrant individually was: he thinks of the representative body, not the personal life.

It is fitting that in *Semarang Hitam* a newspaper appears embedded in fiction, for, if we now turn to the newspaper as cultural product, we will be struck by its profound fictiveness. What is the essential literary convention of the newspaper? If we were to look at a sample front page of, say, *The New York Times,* we might find there stories about Soviet dissidents, famine in Mali, a gruesome murder, a coup in Iraq, the discovery of a rare fossil in Zimbabwe,

and a speech by Mitterrand. Why are these events so juxtaposed? What connects them to each other? Not sheer caprice. Yet obviously most of them happen independently, without the actors being aware of each other or of what the others are up to. The arbitrariness of their inclusion and juxtaposition (a later edition will substitute a baseball triumph for Mitterrand) shows that the linkage between them is imagined.

This imagined linkage derives from two obliquely related sources. The first is simply calendrical coincidence. The date at the top of the newspaper, the single most important emblem on it, provides the essential connection—the steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time.[53] Within that time, "the world" ambles sturdily ahead. The sign for this: if Mali disappears from the pages of *The New York Times* after two days of famine reportage, for months on end, readers do not for a moment imagine that Mali has disappeared or that famine has wiped out all its citizens. The novelistic format of the newspaper assures them that somewhere out there the "character" Mali moves along quietly, awaiting its next reappearance in the plot.

The second source of imagined linkage lies in the relationship between the newspaper, as a form of book, and the market. It has been estimated that in the 40-odd years between the publication of the Gutenberg Bible and the close of the fifteenth century, more than 20,000,000 printed volumes were produced in Europe.[54] Between 1500 and 1600, the number manufactured had reached between 150,000,000 and 200,000,000.[55] "From early on . . . the printing shops looked more like modern workshops than the monastic workrooms of the Middle Ages. In 1455, Fust and Schoeffer were already running a business geared to standardized production, and twenty years later large printing concerns were operating everywhere in all [sic] Europe."[56] In a rather special sense, the book was the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity.[57] The sense I have in mind can be shown if we compare the book to other early industrial products, such as textiles, bricks, or sugar. For these commodities are *measured* in mathematical amounts (pounds or loads or pieces). A pound of sugar is simply a quantity, a convenient load, not an object in itself. The book, however—and here it prefigures the durables of our time—is a distinct, self-contained object, exactly reproduced on a large scale.[58] One pound of sugar flows into the next; each book has its own eremitic self-sufficiency. (Small wonder that libraries, personal collections of mass-produced commodities, were already a familiar sight, in urban centers like Paris, by the sixteenth century.)[59]

In this perspective, the newspaper is merely an "extreme form" of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity. Might we say one-day best-sellers?[60] The obsolescence of the newspaper on the morrow of its printing—curious that one of the earlier mass-produced commodities should so prefigure the inbuilt obsolescence of modern durables—nonetheless, for just this reason, creates this extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption ("imagining") of the newspaper-as-fiction. We know that particular morning and evening editions will overwhelmingly be consumed between this hour and that, only on this day, not that. (Contrast sugar, the use of which proceeds in an unclocked, continuous

flow; it may go bad, but it does not go out of date.) The significance of this mass ceremony—Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers—is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull.[61] Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned?[62] At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life. As with *Noli Me Tangere,* fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the specific origins of nationalism, it may be useful to recapitulate the main propositions put forward thus far. Essentially, I have been arguing that the very possibility of imagining the nation only arose historically when, and where, three fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds. The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth. It was this idea that called into being the great transcontinental sodalities of Christendom, the Ummah Islam, and the rest. Second was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centers—monarchs who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation. Human loyalties were necessarily hierarchical and centripetal because the ruler, like the sacred script, was a node of access to being and inherent in it. Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical. Combined, these ideas rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things, giving certain meaning to the everyday fatalities of existence (above all death, loss, and servitude) and offering, in various ways, redemption from them.

The slow, uneven decline of these interlinked certainties, first in Western Europe, later elsewhere, under the impact of economic change, "discoveries" (social and scientific), and the development of increasingly rapid communications, drove a harsh wedge between cosmology and history. No surprise then that the search was on, so to speak, for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together. Nothing perhaps more precipitated this search, nor made it more fruitful, than print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways.

Notes

1. The ancient Greeks had cenotaphs, but for specific, known individuals whose bodies, for one reason or another, could not be retrieved for regular burial. I owe this information to my Byzantinist colleague Judith Herrin.

2. Consider, for example, these remarkable tropes: 1. "The long grey line has never failed us. Were you to do so, a million ghosts in olive drab, in brown khaki, in blue and grey, would rise from their white crosses, thundering those magic words: Duty, honour, country." 2. "My estimate of [the American man-at-arms] was formed on the battlefield many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded him then, as I regard him now, as one of the world's noblest figures; not only as one of the finest military characters, but also as one of the most stainless [*sic*]. He belongs to history as furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism [*sic*]. He belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom. He belongs to the present, to us, by his virtues and his achievements." Douglas MacArthur, "Duty, Honour, Country," Address to the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, May 12, 1962, in his *A Soldier Speaks,* pp. 354 and 357.

3. Cf. Debray, "Marxism and the National Question," p. 29. In the course of doing fieldwork in Indonesia in the 1960s I was struck by the calm refusal of many Muslims to accept the ideas of Darwin. At first I interpreted this refusal as obscurantism. Subsequently I came to see it as an honorable attempt to be consistent: the doctrine of evolution was simply not compatible with the teachings of Islam. (What are we to make of a scientific materialism which formally accepts the findings of physics about matter, yet makes so little effort to link these findings with the class struggle, revolution, or whatever. Does not the abyss between protons and the proletariat conceal an unacknowledged metaphysical conception of man?) But see the refreshing texts of Timpanaro, *On Materialism* and *The Freudian Slip;* and Williams' thoughtful response to them in "Timpanaro's Materialist Challenge," pp. 3–17.

4. The late President Sukarno always spoke with complete sincerity of the 350 years of colonialism that his "Indonesia" had endured, although the very concept "Indonesia" is a twentieth-century invention, and most of today's Indonesia was only conquered by the Dutch between 1850 and 1910. Preeminent among contemporary Indonesia's national heroes is the early nineteenth-century Javanese Prince Diponegoro, although the Prince's own memoirs show that he intended to "conquer [not liberate!] *Java,*" rather than expel "the Dutch." Indeed, he clearly had no concept of "the Dutch" as a collectivity. See Benda and Larkin, *The World of Southeast Asia,* p. 158; and Kumar, "Diponegoro (1778?–1855)," p. 103. Emphasis added. Similarly, Kemal Atatürk named one of his state banks the Eti Banka (Hittite Bank) and another the Sumerian Bank. (Seton-Watson, *Nations and States,* p. 259). These banks flourish today, and there is no reason to doubt that many Turks, possibly not excluding Kemal himself, seriously saw, and, see, in the Hittites and Sumerians their Turkish forebears. Before laughing too hard, we should remind ourselves of Arthur and Boadicea, and ponder the commercial success of Tolkien's mythographies.

5. Hence the equanimity with which Sinicized Mongols and Manchus were accepted as Sons of Heaven.

6. Lynch, *The Spanish-American Revolutions, 1808–1826,* p. 260. Emphasis added.

7. Church Greek seems not to have achieved the status of a truth-language. The reasons for this "failure" are various, but one key factor was certainly the fact that Greek remained a *living* demotic speech (unlike Latin) in much of the Eastern Empire. This insight I owe to Judith Herrin.

8. Nicholas Brakespear held the office of pontiff between 1154 and 1159 under the name Adrian IV.

9. Bloch reminds us that "the majority of lords and many great barons [in medieval times] were administrators incapable of studying personally a report or an account." *Feudal Society,* I, p. 81.

10. This is not to say that the illiterate did not read. What they read, however, was not words but the visible world. "In the eyes of all who were capable of reflection the material world was scarcely more than a sort of mask, behind which took place all the really important things; it seemed to them also a language, intended to express by signs a more profound reality." Bloch, p. 83.

11. Auerbach, *Mimesis,* p. 282.

12. Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo,* pp. 158–59. Emphases added. Notice that, though kissed, the Evangel is not read.

13. *Travels of Marco Polo,* p. 152.

14. Montesquieu, *Persian Letters,* p. 81. The *Lettres Persones* first appeared in 1721.

15. Bloch, *Feudal Society,* I, p. 77. Emphasis added.

16. Febvre and Martin, *The Coming of the Book,* pp. 248–49.

17. Ibid., p. 321.

18. Ibid., p. 330.

19. Ibid., pp. 331–32.

20. Ibid., pp. 232–33. The original French is more modest and historically exact. "Tandis que l'on édite de moins en moins d'ouvrages en latin, et une proportion toujours plus grande de textes en langue nationale, le commerce du livre se morcelle en Europe." *L'Apparition du Livre,* p. 356.

21. Notice the displacement in rulers' nomenclature that corresponds to this transformation. Schoolchildren remember monarchs by their first names (what *was* William the Conqueror's surname?), presidents by their last (what *was* Ebert's Christian name?). In a world of citizens, all of whom are theoretically eligible for the presidency, the limited pool of "Christian" names makes them inadequate as specifying designators. In monarchies, however, where rule is reserved for a single surname, it is necessarily "Christian" names, with numbers, or sobriquets, that supply the requisite distinctions.

22. We may here note in passing that Nairn is certainly correct in describing the 1707 Act of Union between England and Scotland as a "patrician bargain," in the sense that the union's architects were aristocratic politicians. (See his lucid discussion in *The Break-up of Britain,* pp. 136ff.) Still, it is difficult to imagine such a bargain being struck between the aristocracies of two republics. The conception of a United *Kingdom* was surely the crucial mediating element that made the deal possible.

23. Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy,* p. 34.

24. Most notably in pre-modern Asia. But the same principle was at work in monogamous Christian Europe. In 1910, one Otto Forst put out his *Abnentafel Seiner Kaiserlichen und Königlichen Hobeit des durchblauchtigsten Herrn Erzherzogs Franz Ferdinand,* listing 2,047 of the soon-to-be-assassinated Archduke's ancestors. They included 1,486 Germans, 124 French, 196 Italians, 89 Spaniards, 52 Poles, 47 Danes, 20 Englishmen/women, as well as four other nationalities. This "curious document" is cited in ibid., p. 136, n. 1. I can not resist quoting here Franz Joseph's wonderful reaction to the news of his erratic heir-apparent's murder: "In this manner a superior power has restored that order which I unfortunately was unable to maintain" (ibid., p. 125).

25. Gellner stresses the typical foreignness of dynasties, but interprets the phenomenon too narrowly: local aristocrats prefer an alien monarch because he will not take sides in their internal rivalries. *Thought and Change,* p. 136.

26. Bloch, *Les Rois Thaumaturges,* pp. 390, 398–99.

27. Noel A. Battye, "The Military, Government and Society in Siam, 1868–1910," p. 270.

28. Greene, "Thai Government and Administration in the Reign of Rama VI (1910–1925)," p. 92.

29. More than 1,000 of the 7,000–8,000 men on the Prussian Army's officer list in 1806 were foreigners. "Middle-class Prussians were outnumbered by foreigners in their own army; this lent colour to the saying that Prussia was not a country that had an army, but an army that had a country." In 1798, Prussian reformers had demanded "reduction by one half of the number of foreigners, who still amounted to about 50% of the privates." Vagts, *A History of Militarism,* pp. 64, 85.

30. For us, the idea of "modern dress," a metaphorical equivalencing of past with present, is a backhanded recognition of their fatal separation.

31. Bloch, *Feudal Society,* I, pp. 84–86.

32. Auerbach, *Mimesis,* p. 64. Emphasis added. Compare St. Augustine's description of the Old Testament as "the shadow of [i.e., cast backward by] the future." Cited in Bloch, *Feudal Society,* I, p. 90.

33. Benjamin, *Illuminations,* p. 265.

34. Ibid., p. 263. So deep-lying is this new idea that one could argue that every essential modern conception is based on a conception of "meanwhile."

35. While the *Princesse de Clèves* had already appeared in 1678, the era of Richardson, Defoe and Fielding is the early eighteenth century. The origins of the modern newspaper lie in the Dutch gazettes of the late seventeenth century; but the newspaper only became a general category of printed matter after 1700. Febvre and Martin, *The Coming of the Book,* p. 197.

36. Indeed, the plot's grip may *depend* at Times I, II, and III on A, B, C and D not knowing what the others are up to.

37. This polyphony decisively marks off the modern novel even from so brilliant a forerunner as Petronius's *Satyricon.* Its narrative proceeds single file. If Encolpius bewails his young lover's faithlessness, we are not simultaneously shown Gito in bed with Ascyltus.

38. In this context it is rewarding to compare any historical novel with documents or narratives from the period fictionalized.

39. Nothing better shows the immersion of the novel in homogeneous, empty time than the absence of those prefatory genealogies, often ascending to the origin of man, which are so characteristic a feature of ancient chronicles, legends, and holy books.

40. Rizal wrote this novel in the colonial language (Spanish), which was then the lingua franca of the ethnically diverse Eurasian and native elites. Alongside the novel appeared also for the first time a "nationalist" press, not only in Spanish but in such "ethnic" languages as Tagalog and Ilocano. See Yabes, "The Modern Literature of the Philippines," pp. 287–302, in Lafont and Lombard, *Littératures Contemporaines de l'Asie du Sud-Est.*

41. Rizal, *The Lost Eden, Noli Me Tangere,* p. 1.

42. The obverse side of the readers' anonymous obscurity was/is the author's immediate celebrity. As we shall see, this obscurity/celebrity has everything to do with the spread of print-capitalism. As early as 1593 energetic Dominicans had published in Manila the *Doctrina Christiana.* But for centuries thereafter print remained under tight ecclesiastical control. Liberalization only began in the 1860s. See Lumbera, "Tradition and Influences in the Development of Tagalog Poetry, 1570 to 1898," pp. 35, 143, 236.

43. Ibid., pp. 173ff.

44. Ibid., pp. 205–6.

45. The technique is similar to that of Homer, so ably discussed by Auerbach, *Mimesis,* ch. 1 ("Odysseus' Scar").

46.

Paalam Albaniang pinamamayanan
ng casama, t, lupit, bangis caliluhan,
acong tangulan mo, i, cusa mang pinatay
sa iyo, i, malaqui ang panghihinayang.

Farewell, Albania, kingdom now
of evil, cruelty, brutishness and deceit!
I, your defender, whom you now murder
Nevertheless lament the fate that has befallen you.

This famous stanza has sometimes been interpreted as a veiled statement of Filipino patriotism, but Lumbera convincingly shows such an interpretation to be an anachronistic gloss. "Tradition and Influences," pp. 214–15. The translation is Lumbera's. I have slightly altered his Tagalog text to conform to a 1973 edition of the poem based on the 1861 imprint.

47. Franco, *An Introduction to Spanish-American Literature,* p. 34.

48. Ibid., pp. 35–36. Emphasis added.

49. This movement of a solitary hero through an adamantine social landscape is typical of many early (anti-)colonial novels.

50. After a brief, meteoric career as a radical journalist, Marco was interned by the Dutch colonial authorities in Boven Digul, one of the world's earliest concentration camps, deep in the interior swamps of western New Guinea. There he died in 1932, after six years' confinement. Chambert-Loir, "Mas Marco Kartodikromo (c. 1890–1932)," p. 208.

51. As translated by Tickell in his *Three Early Indonesian Short Stories by Mas Marco Kartodikromo (c. 1890–1932),* p. 7. Emphasis added.

52. In 1924, a close friend and political ally of Marco published a novel titled *Rasa Merdika* [Feeling Free/The Feel of Freedom]. Of the hero of this novel (which he wrongly atributes to Marco) Chambert-Loir writes that "he has no idea of the meaning of the word 'socialism': nonetheless he feels a profound malaise in the face of the social organization that surrounds him and he feels the need to enlarge his horizons by two methods: *travel and reading.*" ("Mas Marco," p. 208. Emphasis added.) The Itching Parrot has moved to Java and the twentieth century.

53. Reading a newspaper is like reading a novel whose author has abandoned any thought of a coherent plot.

54. Febvre and Martin, *The Coming of the Book,* p. 186. This amounted to no less than 35,000 editions produced in no fewer than 236 towns. As early as 1480, presses existed in more than 110 towns, of which 50 were in today's Italy, 30 in Germany, 9 in France, 8 each in Holland and Spain, 5 each in Belgium and Switzerland, 4 in England, 2 in Bohemia, and 1 in Poland. "From that date it may be said of Europe that the printed book was in universal use" (p. 182).

55. Ibid., p. 262. The authors comment that by the sixteenth century books were readily available to anyone who could read.

56. The great Antwerp publishing house of Plantin controlled, early in the sixteenth century, 24 presses with more than 100 workers in each shop. Ibid., p. 125.

57. This is one point solidly made amidst the vagaries of Marshall McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy* (p. 125). One might add that if the book market was dwarfed by the markets in other commodities, its strategic role in the dissemination of ideas nonetheless made it of central importance to the development of modern Europe.

58. The principle here is more important than the scale. Until the nineteenth century, editions were still relatively small. Even Luther's Bible, an extraordinary best-seller, had only a 4,000-copy first edition. The unusually large first edition of Diderot's *Encyclopédie* numbered no more than 4,250. The average eighteenth-century run was less than 2,000. Febvre and Martin, *The Coming of the Book,* pp. 218–20. At the same time, the book was always distinguishable from other durables by its inherently limited market. Anyone with money can buy Czech cars; only Czech-readers will buy Czech-language books. The importance of this distinction will be considered below.

59. Furthermore, as early as the late fifteenth century the Venetian publisher Aldus had pioneered the portable "pocket edition."

60. As the case of *Semarang Hitam* shows, the two kinds of best-sellers used to be more closely linked than they are today. Dickens too serialized his popular novels in popular newspapers.

61. "Printed materials encouraged silent adherence to causes whose advocates could not be located in any one parish and who addressed an invisible public from afar." Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought," p. 42.

62. Writing of the relationship between the material anarchy of middle-class society and an abstract political state-order, Nairn observes that "the representative mechanism converted real class inequality into the abstract egalitarianism of citizens, individual egotisms into an impersonal collective will, what would otherwise be chaos into a new state legitimacy." *The Break-up of Britain,* p. 24. No doubt. But the representative mechanism (elections?) is a rare and moveable feast. The generation of the impersonal will is, I think, better sought in the diurnal regularities of the imagining life.

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Part Eight

Privacy, Domesticity, Women

The deep association of privacy with the novel, by no means explicit at the origins of the genre, is nonetheless potential in its founding notion of detachment and distance—in the hypothesis of a separation out of categories that traditionally are held together in tacit relationship. The originary separation out of private from public, of internal from external, of interior from exterior does not "create" these categories, which pre-exist the modern era in tacit distinction from each other; rather, separation gives such categories their recognizably "modern" self-standing autonomy. Thus Ian Watt argues, with evolutionary optimism, that personal relations in the novel "may be seen as offering the individual a more conscious and selective pattern of social life to replace the more diffuse, and as it were involuntary, social cohesions which individualism had undermined." We need only recall Benjamin's storyteller to savor the devolutionary pessimism with which the privatizing and internalizing tendencies of the novel may also be contemplated. What these writers nonetheless share is a view of the novel as a genre whose singularly formal dissonance is peculiarly susceptible to being expressed through (in Guillén's terms, to being matched with) languages of privacy and interiority.

Jürgen Habermas has provided a celebrated theoretical account of the early modern division, and therefore also connection, between public and private experience.[1] Watt gives historical concretion to this theory by finding evidence of its "paradoxical" dialectic in the mediatory status of the emergent "middle class"; in discriminations between urban, rural, and suburban life (which "offers a peculiar combination of the solace of society with the safety of personal privacy"); in domestic architecture and its variously gendered interiors; in the subjective objectivity of epistolary form and the typographical medium. Of novelistic characters he says: "[W]e get inside their minds as well as inside their houses." "[L]etters are the most direct material evidence for the inner life of their writers that exist." "The impersonal authority of print is complemented by its capacity for securing a complete penetration of the reader's subjective life."

Watt's discussion, proceeding as it does from context and content to form,

1. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), pts. 1–4.

imitates the complex differential between the public and the private that is the subject of his analysis. The achievement of the letter form he describes in terms that suggest a capacity to reproduce (with a difference) the apparently immediate, spontaneous, and "present-tense" mnemonics of orality.[2] Early modern sociocultural existence, divided between "inner life" and "outer," discovers in the former a powerful dialectic of (re)unification. "[I]t is this minute-by-minute content of consciousness which constitutes what the individual's personality really is, and dictates his relationship to others: it is only by contact with this consciousness that a reader can participate fully in the life of a fictional character." Indeed self-consciousness, which distances "individual" from "society," also constitutes individual personality as that which can be authentically known from without. It's therefore only now, with the novel, that the most intensely "vicarious identification" becomes available in literature, since it's only now that personal identity is sufficiently objectified to be subjectively apprehensible as such.[3]

Nancy Armstrong's account of the relation between privacy and the English novel, indebted to the work of Michel Foucault, is based on a two-stage historiography far more discontinuous than Watt's. Like her predecessors in the theory of the novel, Armstrong would focus on a fundamental historical transformation by which the tacit relations that constitute the social collective came to be experienced, with detachment, as a separation both between individuals and between individuals and the collective. The traditional understanding of "the history of the individual as well as the history of the state in terms of kinship relations" was disrupted by "a struggle to individuate wherever there was a collective body." Unlike her predecessors, however, and in line with her Foucauldian method, Armstrong locates this transformation with surprising precision. Rather than a complex transition requiring the entire early modern period to accomplish, the change took place in the middle of the eighteenth century; rather than a complex multicausal phenomenon, the change was determined by "writing"[4] alone—by conduct books and the domestic novel itself.

For Watt, the modern relation of public and private is a dialectical one influenced by many factors;[5] for Armstrong it is dichotomous and owes to the factor of modern gender division alone. "[T]he novel exercised tremendous

2. See above, pt. 2.

3. Watt's acute analysis here nonetheless betrays some of the partiality evident in the way his account of formal realism stresses empirical objectivity at the expense of self-conscious reflexivity: see above, pt. 7.

4. In Armstrong's usage, this term can mean anything from "printed texts" to "representation." The resulting confusion empowers the former with the epistemological punch of the latter, and may aim to lend credence to her monocausal thesis (domestic fiction determined modern society because representation is prior to "reality"). Armstrong's polemic against materialist determinism, which her insistence on the determinacy of "writing" subserves, is a red herring (compare the dialectics of a representative Marxist, Georg Lukács, above, pt. 4) that distracts attention from her own determinism.

5. Including changes in marriage, the family, the status of women, and attitudes toward sexuality and gender division, all of which he treats in the chapter of *Rise* that precedes the one excerpted here.

power by producing oppositions that translated the complex and competing ways of representing human identity into a single binary opposition represented by male versus female." "It is only by thus subordinating all social differences to those based on gender that these novels bring order to social relationships." "The gendering of human identity provided the metaphysical girders of modern culture."

Armstrong means by this two things. First, the revolution of modernity was fought in the name of women, with whom alone (she claims) was first associated the modern virtue of individuality: of worth not birth, behavior not status, substance not surface, mental qualities not bodily prowess.[6] Second, gender division undergirds modern culture because it is responsible for a split between the psychosexual and the political, which in modern culture has been cut free of its sources both in gender and in the novel: "From the beginning, domestic fiction actively sought to disentangle the language of sexual relations from the language of politics." That is, the novel sought "to attach psychological motives to what had been the openly political behavior of contending groups." "[O]ver time the novel produced a language of increasing psychological complexity for understanding individual behavior. . . . [A]s fiction progressively uncovered the 'depths' of individual identity, a complex system of political signs was displaced." These passages may suggest that Armstrong inhabits the structuralist-psychoanalytic tradition of novel theory more than that of the grand theorists. For the latter, novelistic "distance" is a condition of "parodic" self-consciousness regarding the sociopolitical construction of the given. In Armstrong's historiography this is reversed. Under the traditionality of kinship relations (she seems to imply), "the language of politics" was used in a way that ensured that "openly political behavior" was recognized as such. However, novelistic language "displaces" the "system of political signs" so as to obscure or censor, by psychosexualizing, the political nature of what it represents.

What is the pristine "place" from which political meaning has come to be displaced? Armstrong's lack of interest in literary genre and form (or structure)[7] makes clear that neither Frye nor Lévi-Strauss can help answer this question. The psychoanalytic equivalent of form—the Oedipal affective nexus that lies at the root of fantasy production in Freud and Robert—brings us closer to the mark: something like the Foucauldian category of (the will to?) "power" as such. Represented with candid transparency under the long reign of kinship relations, "power" is suddenly obscured by the domestic novel's gender division.[8]

6. Armstrong's emphasis on gender division recalls the psychoanalytic implication that the family romance entails distinct narrative models, fantastic male adventure and realistic female domesticity (see above, pt. 3). But if Watt has difficulty accommodating Fielding to his novel paradigm, Armstrong is hard put to admit the Defoe of *Robinson Crusoe* into hers.

7. Contrast even Anderson, who interestingly takes up novelistic form despite the relatively peripheral status of the novel in his analysis. Despite (perhaps because of) her abstracted preoccupation with the constructive force of "writing," Armstrong overlooks the way novelistic reflexivity provides a concrete enactment of it.

8. In this framework, Armstrong's "domestic fiction" might appear to correspond to Robert's Bastard stage of the family romance, since both involve the divisive gendering of a formerly unified category. But where the Oedipal nexus in Robert is nothing if not psychosexual, Armstrong's "power" is only obscured and displaced by the language of psychosexuality. Some

The role of the sympathetic modern scholar[9] is then to recover, by disclosing beneath the distortions of domestic fiction, the abiding politics of its "new," "modern form of power." This may in fact be the ideological or "political" function of the domestic novel itself—the function "to relate without revealing, and simultaneously to resolve."[10] "In this way, domestic fiction could represent an alternative form of political power without appearing to contest the distribution of power that it represented as historically given." Yet the historical rupture on which Armstrong's thesis depends is compromised in another way as well. Read from the nineteenth century, the domestic novel of the eighteenth turns out to have been "a form of political resistance" after all. Thus the abrupt discontinuity between tradition and Richardson is recapitulated in the rupture between Richardson and the Brontës, and the two-part periodization takes on a third period.

Gillian Brown goes far toward supplying the continuity, and the historical dialectic, that are absent in Armstrong's analysis. Domestic ideology does not constitute individualism; it accommodates individualism to the domestic sphere: "[T]he nineteenth-century rise of domesticity [is] a development within the history of individualism." By the same token (but at a more concrete level of specification), the optical illusion of resistance to domesticity is really resistance to "the sexual division of individualism within domesticity." An opposition that is also a correlation, the dialectical relationship between individualism and domesticity in nineteenth-century Anglo-American culture helps us understand how to theorize the domestic novel in terms that are compatible with the general theory of the novel in its early modern origins.

Lukács's famous figure of the novel as the genre of homelessness, and of the search for home,[11] at first appears if anything *in*compatible with a subgeneric development whose premise would seem to be the condition of being at home. Brown's point, however, is that "being at home" in the domestic novel presumes the detached state of "homelessness" peculiar to the novel as such, as well as to novelistic character, for which individuality is detachable from typicality. The "direct givenness" of the epic experience precludes the separability of the self from its society. The separation out of the self, the integrity of the self over against social impingement, grounds both individualism and domesticity: "Conceived as withdrawn to himself, the individual shares the definitive principle of domesticity: its withdrawal from the marketplace." Lukács's "search for home" is a quest for self-possession by characters who, conceiving the world "as a prison instead of as a parental home," may experience the domestic home as the locus for, but never as the fulfillment of, that search. The psychoanalytic division of narrative into male adventure romance versus female domestic realism must therefore be reconceived, in the nineteenth-century context, as a unity. But the domestic locus also encloses the sexual

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of the liabilities in Armstrong's ambition to provide a "political history" of the novel are evident in its tendency, when pursued at any length, to become murky as both history and politics.

9. Compare Lévi-Strauss, *Naked Man,* and Frye, *Secular Scripture,* on the recovery of structure by structuralism, above, pt. 2.

10. Robert, above, ch. 10.

11. See above, pt. 4.

division of individualism because it figures not only the analogous withdrawals of husband and wife, but also the withdrawal of the (individual) husband from the (domestic) society of the family.

Like Watt's, Brown's analysis encourages us to see the modern division between public and private, male and female as dialectical, not dichotomous. Borrowing a phrase from Lévi-Strauss, Brown treats domestic ideology as a "system of differences" that deploys dyads like these "to maintain cultural coherence." The ideological function of the domestic novel may then be seen to particularize the problem-solving capacity of the novel as such, which Guillén observes is first of all a formal capacity.[12] The fundamental reflexivity entailed in reflecting on the self in its relationality (to the market, to the domestic locus, to its own act of reflection) takes formal expression in the way domestic realism "solves" the formal problem of homelessness by self-consciously internalizing it *within* domestic and psychological "interiors."

In domestic interiors, the housewife recapitulates the individualist authority of *homo economicus* even as she constitutes, in miniature, the social order against which male individuality is defined. In psychological interiority, domestic "sentimentalism" names the self-conscious identificatory mechanism whose ability to attain psychic community is predicated on the perceived dissolution of actual community.[13] The persistence of the novel beyond the early modern period depends (as Ortega y Gasset suggests) on its capacity to internalize the problem of homelessness, to "absorb" the early history of the novel as the early novel had absorbed pre-novelistic narrative.[14] By the same token, the internalizing momentum carries novelistic characterization through the earlier and more externalized types of individualist singularity—picaro, foundling, bastard, servant, parvenu, entrepreneur, adulterer—to arrive, in the nineteenth century, at the overdetermined and paradigmatic individualism of the (domestic) woman.

12. See Lévi-Strauss, *Savage Mind,* above, pt. 2. See Guillén, pt. 1: "A genre . . . is a problem-solving model on the level of form."

13. On the self-consciousness of the sentimental, see Friedrich Schiller, "Naive and Sentimental Poetry," in *Naive and Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime,* trans. and ed. Julius A. Elias (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966), pp. 87–90.

14. On absorption in the novel and on internalization in the modern novel see Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations* and *Notes,* respectively, above, pt. 5.

18

Ian Watt

From The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding

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Aaron Hill was perhaps the most ebullient member of the vociferous Richardson *claque,* but when he announced that "a force that can tear the heartstrings" had appeared "to gild the horror of our literary midnight"[1] he was only slightly exaggerating the emotional enthusiasm with which *Pamela* and *Clarissa* were received by most of his contemporaries both in England and abroad.[2] We have already seen that one reason for this enthusiasm was the way that Richardson's subject-matter endeared him to feminine readers; but the men, on the whole, seem to have been almost equally excited, and so we must seek for further explanations.

One fairly common view has been that Richardson's novels gratified the sentimental tendencies of his age. "Sentimentalism" in its eighteenth-century sense denoted an un-Hobbesian belief in the innate benevolence of man, a credo which had the literary corollary that the depiction of such benevolence engaged in philanthropic action or generous tears was a laudable aim. There are undoubtedly features in Richardson's work which are "sentimental" in this as well as in the current sense, but the term is nevertheless somewhat misleading when applied either to his own outlook or to the characteristic literary quality of his novels. For, as we have seen, Richardson's moral theory was opposed to the cult of love and emotional release in general, while in his practice as a novelist he presented a much wider range of feelings than those to which the sentimentalists proper usually restricted themselves. What is distinctive about Richardson's novels is not the kind or even the amount of emotion, but rather the authenticity of its presentation: many writers of the period talked about "sympathetic tears"; even more deplorably Richardson talked about "pellucid fugitives,"[3] but he made them flow as no one else and as never before.

How Richardson made them flow, how he involved his readers so deeply in the sentiments of his characters, is well described by Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* (1804):

> Other writers avoid all details that are not necessary or impressive. . . . The consequence is, that we are only acquainted with their characters in their dress of ceremony, and that, as we never see them except in those critical circum-

> stances, and those moments of strong emotion, which are but of rare occurrence in real life, we are never deceived into any belief of their reality, and contemplate the whole as an exaggerated and dazzling illusion. With such authors we make a visit by appointment, and see and hear only what we know has been prepared for our reception. With Richardson, we slip, invisible, into the domestic privacy of his characters, and hear and see every thing that is said and done among them, whether it be interesting or otherwise, and whether it gratify our curiosity or disappoint it. We sympathise with the former, therefore, only as we sympathise with the monarchs and statesmen of history, of whose condition as individuals we have but a very imperfect conception. We feel for the latter, as for our private friends and acquaintance, with whose whole situation we are familiar. . . . In this art Richardson is undoubtedly without an equal, and, if we except De Foe, without a competitor, we believe, in the whole history of literature.[4]

One of the constituents of the narrative method described by Jeffrey was noted in the first chapter—the more minutely discriminated time-scale, and the much less selective attitude to what should be told the reader, which are characteristic of Richardson's formal realism. But this unselective amplitude of presentation does not alone explain how Richardson enables us to "slip into the domestic privacy of the characters": we must take account of the direction as well as of the scale of his narrative. This direction, of course, is toward the delineation of the domestic life and the private experience of the characters who belong to it: the two go together—we get inside their minds as well as inside their houses.

It is primarily this re-orientation of the narrative perspective which gives Richardson his place in the tradition of the novel. It distinguishes him from Defoe, for example: since although both writers were, as Mrs. Barbauld wrote, "accurate describers, minute and circumstantial . . . the minuteness of Defoe was more employed about things, and that of Richardson about persons and sentiments."[5] In combination with his fullness of presentation it also distinguishes him from the rival French claimants to the paternity of the modern novel. When George Saintsbury, for example, concludes that *Pamela* is indeed the first novel, he does so because the only answer he can give to the question "Where are we to find a probable human being, worked out to the same degree, before?" is—"Nowhere."[6] There are many equally probable and perhaps more interesting characters in literature before Pamela, but there are none whose daily thoughts and feelings we know so intimately.

What forces influenced Richardson in giving fiction this subjective and inward direction? One of them is suggested by the formal basis of his narrative—the letter. The familiar letter, of course, can be an opportunity for a much fuller and more unreserved expression of the writer's own private feelings than oral converse usually affords, and the cult of such correspondence was one which had largely arisen during Richardson's own lifetime, and which he himself both followed and fostered.

In itself it involved a very significant departure from the classical literary perspective; as Madame de Staël wrote, "the ancients would never have

thought of giving their fiction such a form" because the epistolary method "always presupposes more sentiment than action."[7] Richardson's narrative mode, therefore, may also be regarded as a reflection of a much larger change in outlook—the transition from the objective, social and public orientation of the classical world to the subjective, individualist and private orientation of the life and literature of the last two hundred years.

The contrast is a fairly familiar one. It is implied in Hegel's comparison between ancient and modern tragedy, or in Goethe's and Matthew Arnold's yearning for the impersonality and objectivity of Greek and Roman art, as opposed to the feverish subjectivity of their own romantic literature; and its most important aspect from our point of view is expressed by Walter Pater in *Marius the Epicurean,* when he comments on how the ancients were "jealous for the most part of affording us a glimpse of that interior self, which in many cases would have actually doubled the interest of their objective informations."[8]

Some of the most important causes of the very different modern emphasis have already been mentioned. Christianity in general, for example, was essentially an inward, individualist and self-conscious kind of religion, and its effects were strongest in Puritanism, with its stress on the inner light; while the indispensable Madame de Staël drew attention to the influence of the changed philosophical outlook of the seventeenth century on the novel's subjective and analytic approach to character: "ce n'est même que depuis deux siècles que la philosophie s'est assez introduite en nous-mêmes pour que l'analyse de ce qu'on éprouve tienne une si grande place dans les livres."[9] The secularization of thought which accompanied the new philosophy tended in the same direction: it produced an essentially man-centered world, and one in which the individual was responsible for his own scale of moral and social values.

Finally, the rise of individualism is of great importance. By weakening communal and traditional relationships, it fostered not only the kind of private and egocentric mental life we find in Defoe's heroes, but also the later stress on the importance of personal relationships which is so characteristic both of modern society and of the novel—such relationships may be seen as offering the individual a more conscious and selective pattern of social life to replace the more diffuse, and as it were involuntary, social cohesions which individualism had undermined. Individualism also contributed to Richardson's emphasis on private experience in at least two other respects: it provided an audience deeply enough interested in all the processes that occur in the individual consciousness to find *Pamela* absorbing; and its economic and social development eventually led to the development of the urban way of life, a fundamental formative influence on modern society which seems to be connected in many ways with the private and subjective tendency both of Richardson personally and of the novel form in general.

I

Eighteenth-century London had an importance in the national life of the time that was unequaled elsewhere. Throughout the period it was over ten times as large as any other town in England,[10] and, perhaps even more important, it was there that such social changes as the rise of economic individualism, the

increase in the division of labor, and the development of the conjugal family, were most advanced; while, as we have seen, it also contained a very large proportion of the reading public—from 1700 to 1760 over half of the booksellers of England were established there.[11]

The continual increase of the size of London was noted by many observers. They were especially struck by the proliferation of buildings beyond the ancient limits of the twin cities of London and Westminster, which became particularly evident after the Great Fire of 1666.[12] Fashion moved westward and northward, while to the east settlements arose which were almost exclusively inhabited by the laboring poor. This increasing segregation of classes was commented on by many writers. Addison's remarks in the *Spectator* are particularly significant: "When I consider this great city in its several quarters and divisions, I look upon it as an aggregate of several nations, distinguished from each other by their respective customs, manners and interests. . . . In short, the inhabitants of St. James's, notwithstanding they live under the same laws, and speak the same language, are a distinct people from those of Cheapside, who are likewise removed from those of the Temple on the one side, and those of Smithfield on the other."[13]

This process—the growth of London and its accompanying social and occupational differentiation—has been seen as "perhaps the most important single feature of the social history of the late Stuart period."[14] It is at least the plainest of many indications that something approaching the modern urban pattern was gradually imposing itself on the more cohesive community that Shakespeare knew: and we should therefore expect to find that some of the distinctive psychological features of modern urbanization began to manifest themselves at the same time.[15]

The growth of the population of London in the last decades of the seventeenth century from about 450,000 in 1660 to 675,000 in 1700,[16] combined with the increasing residential segregation of its inhabitants, and the extension of the metropolitan area, was certainly on a large enough scale to make the contrast between the rural and urban ways of life much deeper and more complete than it had been previously. Instead of the countryman's unchanging landscape, dominated by the regular alternation of the seasons, and the established hierarchy of social and moral order symbolized by the manor-house, the parish church and the village green, the citizen of eighteenth-century London had a horizon that was in many ways like that of modern urban man. The streets and places of resort in the various quarters of the town presented an infinite variety of ways of life, ways of life that anyone could observe, and yet for the most part utterly alien to any one individual's personal experience.

This combination of physical proximity and vast social distance is a typical feature of urbanization, and one of its results is to give a particular emphasis to external and material values in the city-dweller's attitude to life: the most conspicuous values—those which are common to the visual experience of everyone—are economic; in eighteenth-century London, for example, it was the coaches, fine houses and expensive clothes which pervade the outlook of Moll Flanders. There was no real metropolitan equivalent to the expression of the community values available to all represented by the parish church in the

country. In many of the new centers of population there was no church at all, and, consequently, according to Swift, "five parts in six of the people of London [were] absolutely hindered from hearing divine service";[17] and in any case the atmosphere of what was fast becoming "a mart of infidelity"[18] tended to discourage church-going—Bishop Secker said that "people of fashion" often attended "Divine worship in the country . . . to avoid scandal," but that they "seldom or never [did so] in the town."[19] This decline of religious values in the town made way for the supremacy of material values, a supremacy that was symbolized in the way that London was rebuilt after the Great Fire: under the new plan it was the Royal Exchange and not St. Paul's which became the architectural focus of the City.[20]

An environment so large and various that only a little of it can be experienced by any one individual, and a system of values that is mainly economic—these have combined to provide the novel in general with two of its most characteristic themes: the individual seeking his fortune in the big city and perhaps only achieving tragic failure, so often described by the French and American Realists; and, frequently in association with this, the milieu studies of such writers as Balzac, Zola and Dreiser, where we are taken behind the scenes, and shown what actually happens in the places we know only by passing them in the street or reading about them in the newspapers. Both these subjects also feature prominently in eighteenth-century literature, where the novel supplemented the work of journalists and pamphleteers[21] and revealed all the secrets of the town: both Defoe and Richardson appeal to this interest, and it is even more marked in such works as Fielding's *Amelia* and Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker.* At the same time London figured in much of the drama and fiction of the time as the symbol of wealth, luxury, excitement and perhaps a rich husband: for Steele's novel-reading girl Biddy Tipkins, and for Eliza Haywood's Betsy Thoughtless it is the milieu where everything happens, where people really live: triumph in the big city has become the Holy Grail in the individual's secular pilgrimage.

Few participated in the glories and miseries of London life more intensely than Defoe. London born and bred, he ran the gamut of court and jail, and finally, like the Complete Tradesman he wanted to be and in a sense was, finished life with coach and country-house. He was intensely interested in all London's problems, as is evident in such studies as *Augusta Triumphans* (1728), an interesting essay in urban reform, as well as in many of his other works; and he planned to profit directly from London's growth by establishing his ill-fated manufacture of bricks and tiles at Tilbury.

Defoe's novels embody many of the positive aspects of urbanization. His heroes and heroines make their way through the competitive and immoral metropolitan jungle in the pursuit of fortune, and as we accompany them we are given a very complete picture of many of the London milieus, from the Customs House to Newgate Prison, from the poor tenements of Ratcliff to the fashionable parks and houses of the West End. Yet although the picture has its selfish and sordid aspects, it has one very significant difference from that presented by the modern city. Defoe's London is still a community, a community

composed by now of an almost infinite variety of parts, but at least of parts which still recognize their kinship; it is large, but somehow remains local, and Defoe and his characters are a part of it, understanding and understood.

There are probably many reasons for Defoe's buoyant and secure tone. He had some memory of the days before the Great Fire, and the London he had grown up in was still an entity, much of it enclosed by the City Wall. But the major reason is surely that although Defoe had since seen enormous changes, he himself had participated in them actively and enthusiastically; he lived in the hurly-burly where the foundations of the new way of life were being laid: and he was at one with it.

Richardson's picture of London is totally different. His works express, not the life of the whole community, but a deep personal distrust and even fear of the urban environment. Especially in *Clarissa:* its heroine, like Pamela, is not one of the "town-women" whose "confident" mien Richardson so disliked, but a pure country girl; and her fall is caused by the fact that, as she later tells Belford, "I knew nothing of the town and its ways." It is this which prevents Clarissa from realizing that Mrs. Sinclair is "a very vile creature"; and although she notices that the tea which is being used to drug her "has an odd taste" she is easily put off with the explanation that it contains "London milk." When she attempts to escape from her enemies she is equally at a disadvantage, never knowing what duplicities are hidden in the behavior of the people she meets, or what horrors are being perpetrated behind the walls of its houses. Eventually she must die, because the pure heart cannot survive the immoral brutality of the "great wicked town";[22] but not until she has dragged herself through all her Stations of the Cross, from St. Albans to the brothel off fashionable Dover Street, from the shady resorts of Hampstead to the sponging-house in High Holborn, to find peace only when she returns to her native countryside for burial.

It is interesting to note that one at least of Richardson's contemporaries, the anonymous author of the 1754 *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa and Pamela,* saw the agents of Clarissa's downfall as typical products of urbanization. He wrote that "such characters as Lovelace and his associates, or mother Sinclair and her nymphs" could only subsist "in a city like London, the overgrown metropolis of a powerful empire, and an extensive commerce," and added: "all these corruptions are the necessary and unavoidable consequence of such a constitution of things."[23]

There can be little doubt that some of the differences between the attitudes of Defoe and Richardson to urban life are due to the considerable changes that occurred in the middle decades of the century. This period witnessed many innovations such as the replacement of signs by house numbers, the demolition of the city wall, the creation of central authorities for paving and lighting the streets, water and sewerage, the reform of the police system by Fielding; they are not particularly important in themselves, but they show that conditions demanded quite different methods from those which had formerly sufficed:[24] changes of scale had reached a point which made changes of social organization imperative. Nevertheless, the great contrast between Defoe

and Richardson as Londoners cannot be explained only, or even mainly, as the result of the effects of increasing urbanization: the two men were, after all, only a generation apart—Defoe was born in 1660, Richardson in 1689. The major reason for their very different portrayal of urban life is undoubtedly that they were poles apart in physical and psychological constitution.

Even here, however, their differences have a certain representative quality. Defoe had all the vigor of the textile tradesmen pictured by Deloney over a century earlier; like them he was in part a countryman, knowledgeable about crops and cattle, as much at home riding up and down the country as in shop or the counting-house; even in London the 'Change, the coffee-house and the streets supply him with the equivalent of the watching countryside of saga: and wherever he goes he is at home. But if Defoe harks back to the days of the heroic independence of the citizenry, Richardson offers us a glimpse of the middle-class tradesman to come, bounded by the horizons of the office in the city and the gentility of the suburban home.

London itself certainly provides no way of life in which he can participate. On the one hand, he is deeply aware of the social differences between the tradesmen of the City and the people of quality who inhabit Westminster, and this awareness is not qualified by Defoe's confident preference for his own class. "There is a bar between us," Richardson wrote to Mrs. Delany in 1753 concerning a mutual acquaintance, "Temple-Bar. Ladies who live near Hill Street, and Berkeley and Grosvenor Squares, love not to pass this bar. They speak of it, as if it were a day's journey." On the other hand, Richardson participated very little in the life of his own environment. He was "not able to bear a crowd," and stopped going to church on that account; while even in his own printing-shop he preferred to supervise his own workmen by looking through "a spy window."[25] As for the pleasures of the town, they were the road to damnation of such abandoned females as Sally Martin in *Clarissa,* and made him long for "the last age, when there were no Vauxhalls, Ranelaghs, Marybones, and such-like places of diversion, to dress out for and gad after."[26] Even the life of the streets was rapidly becoming something which only the poor shared. Certainly not Richardson if we can judge from the description he gave Lady Bradshaigh of how he walked abroad:

> One hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat usually, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support, when attacked by sudden tremors or startings, and dizziness, which too frequently attack him. . . . Looking directly foreright, as passers by would imagine, but observing all that stirs on either hand of him without moving his short neck; hardly ever turning back . . . a regular even pace, stealing away ground, rather than seeming to rid it.[27]

There is something about Richardson's gait and posture which is distinctively urban; indeed even his ailments have this quality, being, as his friend Dr. George Cheyne told him, the ills typical of "those obliged to follow a sedentary occupation." Cheyne suggested that Richardson, whose nerves did not allow him to ride horseback, should at least get a "chamber-horse," a "liver-shaking device" as B. W. Downs has described it,[28] much used at this

time. But exercise could not allay the fever of his nerves, and here Cheyne diagnosed the "English Malady" or "nervous hyp," which was no more, he confessed, than "a short expression for any kind of nervous disorder,"[29] and which may be regarded as the eighteenth-century version of anxiety neurosis, the typical derangement of the urban Psyche.

Richardson, then, is an example of many of the less salutary effects of urbanization, and here the contrast with his great contemporary Fielding is as great as that with Defoe. It also had equally marked literary consequences, as was pointed out by Richardson's acquaintance Mrs. Donnellan, who linked his poor health with his characteristic sensibility as a writer, in an attempt to console Richardson for his perpetual ill-health:

> the misfortune is, those who are fit to write delicately, must think so; those who can form a distress must be able to feel it; and as the mind and the body are so united as to influence one another, the delicacy is communicated, and one too often finds softness and tenderness of mind in a body equally remarkable for those qualities. Tom Jones could get drunk, and do all sorts of bad things in the height of his joy for his uncle's recovery. I dare say Fielding is a robust, strong man.[30]

Fielding had indeed much of the countryman's robustness, and the disparity between the two novelists and their works may therefore stand as a representative example of a fundamental parting of the ways in the history of English civilization, a parting in which it is the urban Richardson who reflects the way that was to triumph. D. H. Lawrence was keenly aware of the moral and literary effects of this revolution, and he recapitulated many of them in *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover,* his defense of a novel whose treatment of sex may be said to bring the trend initiated by *Pamela* full circle. Briefly he suggests that economic changes and Protestantism combined to destroy man's sense of harmony with the natural life and with his fellows, and as a result created "the feeling of individualism and personality, which is existence in isolation." This harmony had existed "in the old England" until the middle of the eighteenth century: "we feel it," Lawrence wrote, "in Defoe or Fielding. And then, in the mean Jane Austen, it is gone. Already this old maid typifies 'personality' instead of character, the sharp knowing in apartness."[31]

Lawrence, of course, was a refugee from "personality" and personal relationships, from a world of "nothing but people."[32] By being so, he was, perhaps, a refugee from the novel. For the world of the novel is essentially the world of the modern city; both present a picture of life in which the individual is immersed in private and personal relationships because a larger communion with nature or society is no longer available; and it is surely Richardson, rather than his successor Jane Austen, who is the first novelist in whom all the tendencies which make for a "sharp knowing in apartness" are apparent.

The connection between urbanization and the novel's concentration on personal relationships is stated in E. M. Forster's *Howard's End.* Its heroine, Margaret Schlegel, comes to feel that "London was but a foretaste of this nomadic civilisation which is altering human nature so profoundly, and throws

upon personal relations a stress greater than they have ever borne before."[33] The ultimate reason for the connection would seem to be one of the most universal and characteristic features of the city-dweller's experience: the fact that he belongs to many social groups—work, worship, home, leisure—but no single person knows him in all his roles, and nor does he know anyone else in all theirs. The daily round, in fact, does not provide any permanent and dependable network of social ties, and since there is at the same time no other over-riding sense of community or common standards there arises a great need for a kind of emotional security and understanding which only the shared intimacies of personal relationships can supply.

In Defoe there is little suggestion of this need; the personal contacts of Moll Flanders are transient and shallow, but she seems to revel in the multiplicity of her roles and the only kind of security she seeks is economic. By the middle of the century, however, there are signs that a different attitude was coming into being. London, for example, is the milieu where, as the subtitle of her novel *David Simple* (1744) announces, Sarah Fielding's hero travels cheerlessly "Through London and Westminster in Search of a Real Friend," lonely and anonymous in an anarchic environment where personal contacts are mercenary, fleeting and faithless.

Richardson's recoil from this environment would seem to have been very similar. Fortunately, however, there was a way out: urbanization provided its own antidote, the suburb, which offered an escape from the thronged streets, and whose very different mode of life symbolized the difference between the multifarious but casual relationships depicted in Defoe's novels and the fewer but more intense and introverted ones which Richardson portrayed.

Defoe had spent his last years at Stoke Newington, but the pattern of living in the suburbs even before retirement was still relatively new, as was pointed out in the introduction of the 1839 edition of the *Complete English Tradesman,* which comments disdainfully that from Defoe's "insisting so much on the wives of tradesmen acquainting themselves with their husbands' business, and his scarcely making any allusion to out-of-town houses for the families of tradesmen . . . we readily see that a simple state of things then existed in London, such as is now perhaps found only in fourth-rate towns."[34] Very soon, however, the movement of the prosperous into the suburb became very marked, and indeed caused a decline of the population within the city limits.[35] This was one urban trend in which Richardson could unreservedly participate; on week-ends and holidays he was happy to leave his place of business in Salisbury Court off the Strand to luxuriate in the peace of his handsome retreats first at "agreeable suburbane North End," and after 1754 at Parson's Green. Both were in Fulham which, in 1748, according to Kalm, was a "pretty town" with all the houses of brick, set in a countryside that "is everywhere nothing but a pleasaunce."[36] Here Richardson established his little court, where, according to Miss Talbot, "his very poultry [were] made happy by fifty little neat contrivances."[37]

The suburb is perhaps the most significant aspect of the segregation of classes in the new urban pattern. Both the very rich and the very poor are excluded, and so the middle-class pattern can develop unmolested, safe both

from the glittering immorality of the fashionable end of town and from the equally affronting misery and shiftlessness of the poor—the word "Mob" is a significant late-seventeenth-century coinage which reflects a growing distaste and at times even fear of the urban masses.

The contrast between the old urban way of life and the new social pattern which replaced it is perhaps best suggested by the different implications of the words "urbane" and "suburban": the one is a Renaissance idea, the other typically Victorian. "Urbanity" denotes the qualities of politeness and understanding which are the product of the wider social experience which city life makes possible; with it goes the spirit of comedy which, in Italian, French or English comedy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, centers on the gay life of the streets and the squares, where the walls of houses afford a purely nominal privacy. "Suburban," on the other hand, denotes the sheltered complacence and provinciality of the sheltered middle-class home: as Mumford has said, the suburb is a "collective attempt to live a private life";[38] it offers a peculiar combination of the solace of society with the safety of personal privacy; it is dedicated to an essentially feminine ideal of quiet domesticity and selective personal relationships which could only be portrayed in the novel, and which found its first full literary expression in the works of Richardson.

The privacy of the suburb is essentially feminine because it reflects the increasing tendency already discussed to regard the modesty of womanhood as highly vulnerable and therefore in need of a defensive seclusion; and the seclusion of the suburb was increased by two other developments of the period—the greater privacy afforded by Georgian housing, and the new pattern of personal relationships made possible by familiar letter-writing, a pattern which, of course, involves a private and personal relationship rather than a social one, and which could be carried on without leaving the safety of the home.

In the medieval period nearly all the life of the household went on in the common hall. Then gradually the private bedroom and separate dining quarters for masters and servants became current; by the eighteenth century the final refinements of domestic privacy had fully established themselves. There was much more emphasis than before on separate sleeping quarters for every member of the family, and even for the household servants; a separate fireplace in all the main rooms, so that everyone could be alone whenever they wished, became one of the details which the up-to-date housewife noted with approbation; and locks on doors—still a great rarity in the sixteenth century—became one of the modernizations on which the genteel insisted, as Pamela does when she and Mr. B. are preparing a house for her parents.[39] Pamela, of course, has good reason to pay attention to this matter: during her ordeals being able to lock the door of her various sleeping places was a matter of life or a fate worse than death.

Another characteristic feature of the Georgian house is the closet, or small private apartment usually adjoining the bedroom. Typically, it stores not china and preserves but books, a writing desk and a standish; it is an early version of the room of one's own which Virginia Woolf saw as the prime requisite of woman's emancipation; and it was much more characteristically the locus of woman's liberty and even licence than its French equivalent, the bou-

doir, for it was used, not to conceal gallants but to lock them out while Pamela writes her "saucy journal" and Clarissa keeps Anna Howe abreast of the news.

Richardson was something of a propagandist for this new forcing-house of the feminine sensibility; in a letter to Miss Westcomb, for example, he contrasts the "goose-like gabble" of social conversation with the delights of epistolary intercourse for the lady who makes "her closet her paradise."[40] His heroines do not and cannot share the life of the street, the highways and the places of the public resort with Defoe's Moll Flanders and even Fielding's Miss Western, whom Richardson described with characteristically outraged horror as "inn-frequenting Sophia";[41] they inhabit substantial houses that are quiet and secluded but where each room has its feverish and complicated inner life. Their drama unrolls in a flow of letters from one lonely closet to another, letters written by an occupant who pauses only to listen with wild surmise to footsteps in some other part of the house, and who communicates the intolerable sense of strain which arises when an opening door threatens some new violation of a cherished privacy.

In their devotion to familiar letter-writing Richardson's heroines reflect a cult which is one of the most distinctive features of eighteenth-century literary history. The basis of the cult was the great increase in the leisure and literacy of middle-class women; and it was materially assisted by a very great improvement of postal facilities. A penny post was established in London in 1680, and by the twenties of the next century it gave a service whose cheapness, speed and efficiency were, according to Defoe at least, unrivaled throughout Europe; while the ensuing decades also witnessed a great improvement in the postal system of the rest of the country.[42]

With the increase in the writing of letters went a significant change in their nature. In the sixteenth century and earlier most regular correspondences were of a public nature, concerned with commercial, political or diplomatic affairs. Letters were of course written about other matters, about literature, family concerns and indeed love: but they seem to have been fairly rare and confined to a relatively restricted social circle. There is certainly little indication of the existence of the "scribbling treaties" as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu called them,[43] that were so common in the eighteenth century—correspondences in which people of very varying social classes habitually exchanged news and opinions about their ordinary lives. A fairly recent parallel to the kind of change that seems to have occurred is afforded by the telephone: long reserved for important transactions, usually of a business nature, its use, as facilities improved and cheapened, was gradually extended, especially under feminine influence perhaps, to the purposes of ordinary sociability and even intimate converse.

At all events, by 1740 it was apparently not wholly implausible that a servant-girl such as Pamela should keep regularly in touch with her parents; and it was, of course, the wide diffusion of the letter-writing habit which provided Richardson with the initial impetus to write her adventures, since it led two of his bookselling associates to suggest that he prepare a volume of "Familiar Letters" "in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those Country Readers, who were unable to indite for themselves."[44]

Pamela's epistolary expertness, however, suggests a somewhat higher-class position than the one which she is supposed to have—she patently needs no help in inditing! She is, in fact, a heroine after the pattern of those innumerable eighteenth-century gentlewomen who took Richardson's own advice as to the employment of their leisure: "The pen is almost as pretty an implement in a woman's fingers, as a needle."[45]

We are now in a position to see more clearly the main links between urbanization and Richardson's emphasis on private experience. The same causes which brought about Richardson's rejection of city life and his preference for the suburb, made him find his supreme satisfaction in familiar letter-writing, the form of personal intercourse most suited to the way of life which the suburb represents. Only in such a relationship could Richardson circumvent the deep inhibitions which made him silent and ill at ease in company, and caused him to prefer to communicate with his workmen in the printing-house, and even with his own family, by means of "little notes."[46] All these inhibitions could be forgotten when he was engaged in real or fictitious correspondences: it was a necessity of his being so deep that his friends said that "whenever Mr. Richardson thought himself sick, it was because he had not a pen in his hand."[47]

The pen alone offered him the possibility of satisfying his two deepest psychological needs, needs which were otherwise mutually exclusive: withdrawal from society, and emotional release. "The pen," he wrote, "is jealous of company. It expects, as I may say, to engross the writer's whole self; every body allows the writer to withdraw." At the same time the pen offered an escape from solitude into an ideal kind of personal relationship. As he wrote to Miss Westcomb, "Correspondence is, indeed, the cement of friendship; it is friendship avowed under hand and seal: friendship upon bond, as I may say. More pure, and yet more ardent, and less broken in upon, than personal conversation can ever be amongst the most pure, because of the deliberation it allows, from the preparation to, and action of writing."[48] So insistent, indeed, was Richardson's conviction that epistolary converse gave him the emotional satisfaction which ordinary life denied, that he supported his belief with a revelatory, though erroneous, etymology: "familiar letter writing," Lovelace explains in *Clarissa,* "was writing from the heart . . . as the very word '*Cor-respondence*' implied," and adds "Not the heart only; the *soul* was in it."[49]

II

The literary advantages and disadvantages of the epistolary form in fiction have been much discussed.[50] The disadvantages are particularly obvious—the implausibility of such incessant recourse to the pen, and the repetition and prolixity which the method imposes, often make us sympathize with Lovelace's imprecation, "Rot the goose and the goose quill!"[51] The major advantage, of course, is that letters are the most direct material evidence for the inner life of their writers that exist. Even more than the memoir they are, to repeat Flaubert's phrase, "le réel écrit," and their reality is one which reveals the subjective and private orientations of the writer both toward the recipient and the people discussed, as well as the writer's own inner being. As Dr. John-

son wrote to Mrs. Thrale: "A man's letters . . . are only the mirror of his breast, whatever passes within him is shown undisguised in its natural process. Nothing is inverted, nothing distorted, you see systems in their elements, you discover actions in their motives."[52]

The main problem in portraying the inner life is essentially one of the time-scale. The daily experience of the individual is composed of a ceaseless flow of thought, feeling and sensation; but most literary forms—biography and even autobiography for instance—tend to be of too gross a temporal mesh to retain its actuality; and so, for the most part, is memory. Yet it is this minute-by-minute content of consciousness which constitutes what the individual's personality really is, and dictates his relationship to others: it is only by contact with this consciousness that a reader can participate fully in the life of a fictional character.

The nearest record of this consciousness in ordinary life is the private letter, and Richardson was fully aware of the advantages to be derived from his "writing to the minute" technique, as he called it. He was most explicit about this advantage in the Preface to *Clarissa:* "All the letters are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects . . . so that they abound, not only with critical situations, but with what may be called *instantaneous* descriptions and reflections." This present-tense recording of the action, Richardson felt, also gave him a great advantage over the autobiographical memoir which Defoe and Marivaux had used as the basis of their narrative technique. For, as a contemporary critic pointed out in a letter which Richardson reproduced in the Postscript to *Clarissa,* "The minute particulars of events, the sentiments and conversation of the parties" were in his method "exhibited with all the warmth and spirit that the passion supposed to be predominant at the very time could produce"; on the other hand, "Romances in general, and Marivaux's amongst others, are wholly improbable, because they suppose the history to be written after the series of events is closed by the catastrophe; a circumstance which implies a strength of memory beyond all example and probability."[53]

The argument of improbability is not a very convincing one; the epistolary method is by no means exempt from it in other ways, and both methods must be accepted for what they are, literary conventions. But it is true that the use of the epistolary method impels the writer toward producing something that may pass for the spontaneous transcription of the subjective reactions of the protagonists to the events as they occur and thus to break even more completely than Defoe did with the more patently selective and summarizing tendency of classical writing. For, if events are remembered long after the event, the memory performs a somewhat similar function, retaining only what led to significant action and forgetting whatever was transitory and abortive.

Richardson's attempt to achieve what in the "Preface by the Editor" to *Pamela* he called "an immediate impression of every circumstance" obviously led to much that was trifling and ridiculous. This aspect of his narrative was nicely parodied by Shenstone: "So I sat down and wrote thus far: scrattle, scrattle, goes the pen—why, how now? says I—what's the matter with the pen? So I thought I would make an end of the letter, because my pen went

scrattle, scrattle."[54] Pamela's repetitions and her habit of conversing with herself over trivialities are fair enough game; but even in Shenstone's parody, especially when read in its entirety, it is evident that this very garrulity itself brings us extremely close to Pamela's inner consciousness; it is necessary that the train of thought should often be ephemeral and transparent in this way, so that we can feel sure that nothing is being withheld. The very lack of selectiveness, indeed, impels us to a more active involvement in the events and feelings described: we have to pick significant items of character and behavior out of a wealth of circumambient detail, much as in real life we attempt to gather meaning from the casual flux of circumstance. This is the kind of participation which the novel typically induces: it makes us feel that we are in contact not with literature but with the raw materials of life itself as they are momentarily reflected in the minds of the protagonists.

Previous traditions of letter-writing would not have encouraged this narrative direction. John Lyly's *Euphues* (1579), for example, is also an exemplary tale told in letters: but, in keeping both with the literary and the epistolary traditions of his time, Lyly's emphasis was on producing new models of eloquence; the characters and their actions are of very secondary importance. But by the time of *Pamela* the majority of the literate public cared little for the traditions of courtly rhetoric, and used letters only for the purpose of sharing their daily thoughts and acts with a friend; the cult of familiar letter-writing, in fact, provided Richardson with a microphone already attuned to the tones of private experience.

The fact that Richardson was using an essentially feminine, and from a literary point of view, amateur, tradition of letter-writing, also helped him to break with the traditional decorums of prose and use a style that was wholly suited to embody the kind of mental process with which his narrative was concerned. In this, as in many other things, he was a good deal more conscious and even sophisticated about his literary purpose than he sometimes allowed; there is at least a strong suggestion in *Clarissa* that he regarded his own literary style as infinitely superior to those of the classically educated for his particular purposes: Anna Howe tells us that "*mere* scholars" too often "spangle over their productions with *metaphors;* they rumble into *bombast:* the *sublime* with them, lying in *words* and not in *sentiment*"; while others "sinking into the *classical* pits, there poke and scramble about, never seeking to show genius of their own."[55]

On the other hand, the familiar letters both of Richardson and his less educated feminine correspondents were simpler and less conscious: everything was subordinated to the aim of expressing the ideas passing in the mind at the moment of writing. This can be seen in Richardson's real letters as well as his fictional ones: in this passage to Lady Bradshaigh, for example:

> Another there was whom his soul loved; but with a reverence—Hush! Pen, lie thee down!—
>
> A timely Check; where, else, might I have ended? This lady—how hard to forbear the affecting subject! But I *will* forbear. This man presumed not—Again going on! not a word more this night.[56]

There is a complete break here with the mode of Augustan prose, but it is an essential condition for Richardson's success in transcribing the inner drama of impulse and inhibition.

In the novels Richardson's use of language is concentrated on producing what his characters might plausibly write in the circumstances. One expression of this is Richardson's use of popular words and phrases. In *Pamela,* for example, we get such colloquialisms as "fat-face," "no better than he should be," and "you might have beat me down with a feather"[57]—neither elegant nor pungent enough to have been used in comedy or satire, yet redolent of the moral and social milieu of the book. But Richardson's most characteristic linguistic innovation was in vocabulary, and here, too, his aim was to create a literary vehicle for the more exact transcription of psychological processes. One anonymous pamphleteer, for instance, complained about Richardson's "many new-coined words and phrases, Grandison's *meditatingly,* Uncle Selby's *scrupulosities,* and a vast variety of others" which, he feared, might "by the laborious industry of some future compiler" be "transferred into a Dictionary."[58] As it happens, these particular words had been used before although Richardson may well have coined them independently. In any case, they both indicate Richardson's characteristic literary direction: "meditatingly" shows the need for the accurate transcription of the feeling-tones of the characters; while "scrupulosities" is a useful piece of shorthand to denote all the restraints great and small which dominate the inner world of his characters.

Lord Chesterfield, interestingly enough, seems to have been aware of the connection between Richardson's breach with linguistic decorum and the fact that his eye was on a new literary object. He connected Richardson's uneducated "small talk" with his "great knowledge and skill both in painting and in interesting the heart," and conceded that Richardson had "even coined some expressions for those little secret movements that are admirable."[59] He did not, unfortunately, specify what words he had in mind, but three of Richardson's actual coinages may be cited which offer some support for his view: "Childbed *matronises* the giddiest spirits"[60] is evidence of the need to pin down a whole complex psychological development in a single word; *Clarissa* offers us the first recorded usage of the word "personalities" meaning "individual traits," long before its modern usage in the singular was established; while *Grandison* provides us with "femalities" which is indeed "a peculiar but expressive word of Mr. Selby's."[61]

The letter form, then, offered Richardson a short-cut, as it were, to the heart, and encouraged him to express what he found there with the greatest possible precision, even at the cost of shocking the literary traditionalists. As a result, his readers found in his novels the same complete engrossment of their inner feelings, and the same welcome withdrawal into an imaginary world vibrant with more intimately satisfying personal relationships than ordinary life provided, that they had afforded Richardson in the writing: both author and readers, in fact, were continuing the tendencies and interests which had originally led to the development of the formal basis of the narrative mode of *Pamela*—the development of the cult of familiar letter-writing.

III

On the stage, or through oral narration, the intimate and private effect of the letter form would be lost: print is the only medium for this type of literary effect. It is also the only possible mode of communication for modern urban culture. Aristotle thought that the proper size of the city should be limited by the need for the citizens to conduct their affairs in one meeting-place;[62] beyond this size the culture ceases to be oral, and writing becomes the main means of intercommunication; and with the later invention of printing there comes into being that typical feature of modern urbanization which Lewis Mumford has called "the pseudo-environment of paper" whereby "what is visible and real . . . is only what has been transferred to paper."[63]

The literary importance of the new medium is difficult to analyze. But it is at least clear that all the major literary forms were originally oral, and that this continued to affect their aims and conventions long after the advent of print. In the Elizabethan period, for instance, not only poetry but even prose were still composed primarily with a view to performance by the human voice. That literature was eventually to be printed was a minor matter, compared to pleasing patrons whose taste was formed on the old oral models. It was not until the rise of journalism that a new form of writing arose which was wholly dependent on printed performance, and the novel is perhaps the only literary genre which is essentially connected with the medium of print: it is therefore very appropriate that our first novelist should have been a printer himself.

Richardson's reliance on his trade for some of his characteristic literary effects has been noted by F. H. Wilcox: "the very typographical form of Richardson's writings," he points out, "bears witness to his passion for fidelity to the actual fact. No English writer has understood so well the literary possibilities of punctuation marks . . . for inflections and rhythms of actual conversation."[64] Richardson's freedom with italics, large letters, and the dash to indicate an incomplete sentence, certainly help to convey the impression of a literal transcript of reality, although they must surely have been regarded by many of his contemporaries as merely the result of an imperfect command of the normal resources of literary style. Their view, indeed, perhaps finds some justification in two very obtrusive typographical devices in *Clarissa:* the heroine's disjointed outbursts in her delirium are expressed in a jumble of poetical fragments printed at varying angles on the page in imitation of her original demented doodlings on "Paper X"; and Lovelace's final cry "LET THIS EXPIATE" is rendered in extra large capitals.[65]

Richardson, however, exploited the resources of his medium in other and much more important ways. Print, as a mode of literary communication, has two characteristics which derive from its total impersonality: they may be called the authority and the illusion of print, and they give the novelist a tremendous flexibility of narrative approach, since they enable him to modulate effortlessly from the public to the private voice, from the realities of the Stock Exchange to those of the daydream.

The authority of print—the impression that all that is printed is necessar-

ily true—was established very early. If Autolycus's ballads were in print, Mopsa was "sure they are true."[66] The innkeeper in *Don Quixote* has the same conviction about romances.[67] Print, to the reader, is no fallible specimen of humanity—no actor, bard or speaker who must prove himself worthy of credence: it is a material reality which can be seen by all the world and will outlive everyone in it. Nothing printed has any of the individuality, the margin of error, the assertion of personal idiosyncrasy, which even the best manuscript retains; it is more like an impersonal fiat which—partly because the State and the Church print their messages, and so hallow the medium—has received the stamp of universal social approbation. We do not, instinctively at least and until experience has made us wise, question what has appeared in print.

Defoe, obviously, made great use of this authority of print: his stories tend toward the purely impersonal, historic narration of events which is the method of journalism and reportage. It is of the essence of the newspaper that it pretends to be impersonal, to prevent the reader from asking "Who made this up?"

The impersonal authority of print is complemented by its capacity for securing a complete penetration of the reader's subjective life. The mechanically produced and therefore identical letters set with absolute uniformity on the page are, of course, much more impersonal than any manuscript, but at the same time they can be read much more automatically: ceasing to be conscious of the printed page before our eyes we surrender ourselves entirely to the world of illusion which the printed novel describes. This effect is heightened by the fact that we are usually alone when we read, and that the book, for the time being, becomes a kind of extension of our personal life—a private possession that we keep with us in our pocket or under the pillow, and that tells of an intimate world of which no one speaks out loud in ordinary life, a world which had previously found utterance only in the diary, the confession or the familiar letter, forms of expression exclusively addressed to one person, whether the writer himself, the priest or the close friend.

The private nature of the novel's mode of performance was a necessity both for the author and for the reader of *Pamela* or *Clarissa.* It is probable that, for psychological reasons, Richardson, as he himself said, could only have become an author with "the umbrage of the editor's character to screen [himself] behind";[68] while as for the reader, it is a matter of common observation that the reactions of a group tend to be quite different from the reactions which the same individuals would make when alone. Richardson was quite aware of this. When the Rev. Dr. Lewen urges that Clarissa bring Lovelace to public trial for the rape she answers, quite realistically: "Little advantage *in a court* . . . would some of those pleas in my favour have been, which *out of court,* and to a *private* and *serious* audience, would have carried the greatest weight against him." A bare summary of the events might suggest that Clarissa courted her fate; only a full knowledge of her sentiments and aspirations, and the certainty that Lovelace understood them well enough to realize the enormity of his offense, enable us to understand the real nature of the story. This is further exemplified in the brilliantly executed scene at the ball given by Colonel Ambrose where Lovelace secures acceptance from a social group of which many members are friends of Clarissa's and know of his behavior

toward her: even Anna Howe is unable in public to make the effective protest that her feelings demand.[69]

But the supreme reason for Richardson's dependence on the novel's mode of performance is, of course, his concern with that most private aspect of experience, the sexual life. The stage, in Western Europe at least, has never been able to go very far in the description of sexual behavior, whereas in his novels Richardson was able to present much that in any other form would have been quite unacceptable to an audience whose public demeanor, at least, was very severely controlled by the intensified taboos of a Puritan morality.

Clarissa is an extreme example of this. Richardson's impersonal and anonymous role allowed him to project his own secret fantasies into a mysterious next room: and the privacy and anonymity of print placed the reader behind a keyhole where he, too, could peep in unobserved and witness rape being prepared, attempted and eventually carried out. Neither the reader nor the author were violating any decorum: they were in exactly the same situation as Mandeville's virtuous young woman who exemplified the curious duality of public and private attitudes to sex. Her modesty in public was easily ruffled, but "let them talk as much bawdy as they please in the room next to the same virtuous young woman, where she is sure that she is undiscovered, and she will hear, if not hearken to it, without blushing at all."[70] Ironically enough, Richardson himself seems to have used a similar argument to defend himself against those who had censured the "warm" scenes in *Clarissa* as exceeding "the bounds of decency." He either wrote himself, or inspired Mr. Urban to write, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that "a nice person of the sex may not . . . be able to bear those scenes in action, and on the stage, in presence of a thousand witnesses, which she may not think objectible in her closet."[71]

The printing-press, then, provided a literary medium much less sensitive to the censorship of public attitudes than the stage, and one intrinsically better suited to the communication of private feelings and fantasies. One result of this was very apparent in the later development of the novel. After Richardson, many authors, publishers and circulating-library operators began to engage in the mass production of fiction which merely provided opportunities for daydreaming. Such, at least, was the opinion of Coleridge, in a memorable passage of *Biographia Literaria:*

> As to the devotees of the circulating libraries, I dare not compliment their *pass-time* or rather *kill-time* with the name of *reading.* Call it rather a sort of beggarly day-dreaming, during which the mind of the dreamer furnishes for itself nothing but laziness and a little mawkish sensibility. While the whole *materiel* and imagery of the dose is supplied *ab extra* by a sort of *camera obscura* manufactured at the printing office, which, *pro tempore* fixes, reflects, and transmits the moving phantasms of one man's delirium, so as to people the barrenness of a hundred other brains afflicted with the same trance or suspension of all common sense and all definite purpose.[72]

It would be unjust to Richardson, however, to suggest that the main advantage which he derived from the private circuit which print offered between him-

self and his readers was to present them with the content of his own daydreams, much less make possible the description of actions which could not be presented publicly owing to censorship. For although much has been said about Richardson's "keyhole view of life," which he undoubtedly used on occasion for unwholesome ends, it is also the essential basis of his remarkable opening up of the new domain of private experience for literary exploration. We must, after all, remember that the term itself is merely the pejorative form of the metaphor by which another great and dedicated student of the inner life, Henry James, expressed his belief in the necessity for the author's objectivity and detachment: for him the role of the novelist in the house of fiction is, if not that of the peeper through keyholes, at least that of "the watcher at the window."[73]

IV

Many social and technical changes, then, combined to assist Richardson in giving a fuller and more convincing presentation of the inner lives of his characters and of the complexities of their personal relationships than literature had previously seen. This in turn brought about a much deeper and unqualified identification between the reader and these characters. For obvious reasons: we identify ourselves not with actions and situations but with the actors in them, and there had never before been such opportunities for unreserved participation in the inner lives of fictional characters as were offered by Richardson's presentation of the flow of consciousness of Pamela and Clarissa in their letters.

The contemporary reception of Richardson's novels shows this very clearly. Aaron Hill, for example, in a letter which Richardson reproduced in the prefatory matter to *Pamela,* described how he was transformed into all the characters in turn as he read: "Now and then, I am *Colbrand* the Swiss; but, as *broad* as *I stride,* in that Character, I can never escape *Mrs. Jewkes:* who often keeps me awake in the Night";[74] while Edward Young considered *Clarissa* "his last amour."[75] The testimony of Diderot shows that in France also Richardson's characters were felt to be completely real persons. In his *Éloge de Richardson* (1761) he relates how, when reading *Clarissa,* he would cry out involuntarily to the heroine: "Don't believe him! He's deceiving you! If you go you'll be ruined!" As his reading drew to a close he "felt the same sensations that people feel when they are about to part with close friends with whom they have lived for many years," and when he had finished he "suddenly felt that he had been left alone." The experience, indeed, had been so exhausting that when his friends saw him afterward they wondered if he had been ill, and asked if he'd lost a friend, or a parent.[76]

To some extent, of course, identification is a necessity of all literature, as it is of life. Man is a "role-taking animal"; he becomes a human being and develops his personality as the result of innumerable outgoings of himself into the thoughts and feelings of others;[77] and all literature obviously depends upon this human capacity for projection into other people and their situations. Aristotle's theory of catharsis, for instance, presumes that the audience identifies itself to some extent with the tragic hero: how could you be purged but by taking the same dose of salts?

Greek Tragedy, however, like the other literary forms which preceded the novel, contained many elements which limited the extent to which identification could take place. The circumstance of public theatrical performance, the nobility of the hero and the exceptional horror of his fate, all reminded members of the audience that what they were seeing was not life but art, and an art that was depicting people and situations very different from those offered by their own daily experience.

The novel, on the other hand, was inherently devoid of the elements which restricted identification, and this more absolute power over the reader's consciousness does much to account for the peculiar triumphs and degradations of the novel form in general. On the one hand it is capable of the unrivaled subtlety in the exploration of personality and personal relationships which is found in the work of the greatest novelists; "the vast importance of the novel" for D. H. Lawrence is that it can "inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness . . . lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead . . . reveal the most secret places of life."[78] On the other hand, it is the same power over the consciousness which, far from extending psychological and moral awareness, makes possible the novel's role as a popular purveyor of vicarious sexual experience and adolescent wish-fulfillment.

Richardson has a unique place in the tradition of the novel because he initiates both these directions. Every discovery is rich in irony, because it is susceptible to such varied uses, but there is a particularly complete irony in the divergent uses to which Richardson put his literary discovery in his first work: for *Pamela* is both a very remarkable psychological study and an exploitation, as Cheyne wrote to Richardson, of what St. Paul "like a polite man as well as a deep Christian" has forbidden when he wrote "It is a shame for you to speak of those things that are done by you in secret."[79]

Cheyne was hinting at Fielding's most extreme accusation in *Shamela*—the view that *Pamela's* popularity was due to the fact that it provided vicarious sexual stimulation. It is interesting to note that this charge is made in an introductory letter by Thomas Tickletext which is a close parody of Aaron Hill's eulogy of Richardson's power to bring about a complete identification with his characters. Tickletext writes: "if I lay the book down *it comes after me.* When it has dwelt all day long upon the ear, it takes possession all night of the Fancy. It has witchcraft in every page of it.—Oh! I feel an emotion even while I am relating this: Methinks I see Pamela at this instant, with all the Pride of Ornament cast off."

Fielding's mockery was not undeserved; some of the scenes in *Pamela* are more suggestive than anything in Boccaccio's *Decameron,* for example, although it is at first sight difficult to see why this should be so, given Richardson's virtuous intentions. One reason is certainly the greater secrecy surrounding sex in Richardson and his society. In Boccaccio the protagonists of both sexes freely avow their sexual feelings; and their deeds are related orally to a mixed audience without anyone being very seriously shocked, or even excited. Things were very different in the world of Richardson, and the secrecy surrounding the sexual life meant that every move made by Mr. B. engaged

the shocked attention of Richardson's readers much more thoroughly than Boccaccio's treatment of the sexual act itself.

Another reason is probably to be found in the superficial decency of Richardson's descriptions—what Lawrence tellingly described as Richardson's union of "calico purity and underclothing excitements."[80] The moralists who approved of *Pamela* might well have heeded Dennis's argument that "it is a very great error in some persons at present, to be so shy of bawdy, and so fond of love. For obscenity cannot be very dangerous, because it is rude and shocking; but love is a passion, which is so agreeable to the movements of corrupted nature, that by seeing it livelily touched and often represented, an amorous disposition insensible insinuates itself into the chastest breast."[81] There is, indeed, some reason to believe that Richardson himself was not unaware of this antinomy; he remarked contemptuously of Sterne that "one extenuating circumstance attends his works, that they are too gross to be inflaming."[82] He might have said the same of Boccaccio, and we might reply that nothing could be less gross and yet more "inflaming" than some of the passages in *Pamela.*

The main reason, however, why Richardson's erotic scenes are so much more suggestive than Boccaccio's is merely that the feelings of the actors involved are so much more real. We cannot know Boccaccio's characters in the *Decameron,* since they are only necessary devices for the presentation of an amusing situation; we do know Richardson's characters, and his exhaustive treatment of their reactions to each incident makes us imagine that we are participating in every fascinating advance and retreat as it is reflected in Pamela's excited sensibility.

The major objection, however, to *Pamela* and to the novelette tradition it inaugurates, is perhaps not so much that it is salacious but that it gives a new power to age-old deceptions of romance.

The story of *Pamela,* of course, is a modern variant of the age-old Cinderella theme. As the original occupations of both the heroines suggest, both stories are essentially compensations for the monotonous drudgery and limited perspectives of ordinary domestic life. By projecting themselves into the position of the heroine the readers of *Pamela* were able to change the impersonality and boredom of the actual world into a gratifying pattern whose every element was converted into something that gave excitement and admiration and love. Such are the attractions of romance, and Richardson's novel bears everywhere the marks of its romance origin—from Pamela's name, which is that of Sidney's princess in the *Arcadia,* to her assertion of the pastoral heroine's freedom from economic and social realities when she proposes to seek refuge in nature and "live, like a bird in winter, upon hips and haws."[83] But it is romance with a difference: the fairy godmother, the prince and the pumpkin are replaced by morality, a substantial squire and a real coach-and-six.

This is no doubt the reason why Richardson, who so rarely gave his approval to any fiction except his own, was able to forget how close he was to providing exactly the same satisfactions as the romances he derided. His attention was so largely focused on developing a more elaborate representational

technique than fiction had ever seen before that it was easy to overlook the content to which it was being applied—to forget that his narrative skill was actually being used to re-create the pseudo-realism of the daydream, to give an air of authenticity to a triumph against all obstacles and contrary to every expectation, a triumph which was in the last analysis as improbable as any in romance.

This combination of romance and formal realism applied both to external actions and inward feelings is the formula which explains the power of the popular novel: it satisfies the romantic aspirations of its readers in a literary guide which gives so full a background and so complete an account of the minute-by-minute details of thought and sentiment that what is fundamentally an unreal flattery of the reader's dreams appears to be the literal truth. For this reason, the popular novel is obviously liable to severe moral censure where the fairy story or the romance is not: it pretends to be something else, and, mainly owing to the new power which accrued to formal realism as a result of the subjective direction which Richardson gave it, it confuses the differences between reality and dream more insidiously than any previous fiction.

The confusion itself, of course, was not new, at least since *Don Quixote.* But if we compare *Don Quixote* with *Madame Bovary,* its classic equivalent as regards the effects of the novel, the result of the novel form's apparent realism of action and background combined with its focus on the emotional life of the characters become apparent. Don Quixote is, after all, mad, and the distortions produced by romance issue in actions whose ridiculous unreality is evident to everyone, and even, eventually, to himself; whereas Emma Bovary's conception of reality and her own role in it, though equally distorted, is not seen to be so by her or by anyone else because its distortions exist primarily in the subjective sphere, and the attempt to carry them out does not involve any such obvious collisions with reality as those of Cervantes's hero: she is mistaken, not about sheep and windmills but about herself and her personal relationships.

In this Emma Bovary pays involuntary tribute to the way in which the novel's access to the inner life gives it a more pervasive and enduring sway than the romance, and one which is much more difficult either to escape or to assess. As far as this sway is concerned, indeed, the question of literary quality is not of first importance. For good and ill the novel's power over private experience has made it a major formative influence on the expectations and aspirations of the modern consciousness; as Madame de Staël truly wrote: "les romans, même les plus purs, font du mal; il nous ont trop appris ce qu'il y a de plus secret dans les sentiments. On ne peut plus rien éprouver sans se souvenir presque de l'avoir lu, et tous les voiles du cœur ont été déchirés. Les anciens n'auraient jamais fait ainsi de leur âme un sujet de fiction."[84]

The development of the novel's concentration on private experience and personal relationships is associated with a series of paradoxes. It is paradoxical that the most powerful vicarious identification of readers with the feelings of fictional characters that literature had seen should have been produced by

exploiting the qualities of print, the most impersonal, objective and public of the media of communication. It is further paradoxical that the process of urbanization should, in the suburb, have led to a way of life that was more secluded and less social than ever before, and, at the same time, helped to bring about a literary form which was less concerned with the public and more with the private side of life than any previous one. And finally, it is also paradoxical that these two tendencies should have combined to assist the most apparently realistic of literary genres to become capable of a more thorough subversion of psychological and social reality than any previous one.

But the novel is capable of great illumination too, and so it is natural that our feelings about the genre itself and its social context should be mixed. Perhaps the most representative and inclusive presentation of the problem in all its dubieties is to be found in the supreme culmination of the formal trend that Richardson initiated—James Joyce's *Ulysses.* No book has gone beyond it in the literal transcription of all the states of consciousness, and no book in doing so has depended more completely on the medium of print. Further, its hero, as Lewis Mumford has pointed out, is a very complete symbol of the urban consciousness, regurgitating "the contents of the newspaper and the advertisement, living in a hell of unfulfilled desires, vague wishes, enfeebling anxieties, morbid compulsions and dreary vacuities."[85] Leopold Bloom is representative, too, in his devotion as a reader to the vicarious sexual prowesses offered in such novelettes as *Sweets of Sin,* and his relation, such as it is, with his wife, is colored by their mutual addiction to such delights, and to the clichés they derive from them. Again typically urban, Bloom does not belong to any one social group, but participates superficially in a great many of them; none, however, provide him with the affectionate understanding and the stable personal relationships for which he yearns, and his loneliness leads him to imagine that he has found in Stephen Dedalus the magic helper of folklore and daydream, the "real friend" that David Simple sought.

There is nothing heroic about Bloom, nothing outstanding in any way; it is difficult at first sight to see why anyone should want to write about him; and there is, indeed, only one possible reason, which is also the reason by which the novel in general lives: despite all that can be said against Bloom his inner life is, if we can judge, infinitely more various, more interesting and certainly more conscious of itself and its personal relationships than that of his Homeric prototype. In this, too, Leopold Bloom is the climax of the tendencies we have been concerned with here: and Richardson, who is surely his spiritual kin, must be explained and, perhaps, justified by the same reasons.

Notes

1. Letter to Richardson, Mar. 8, 1749 (Forster MSS. XII, ii, f. 110).

2. Alan D. McKillop, *Samuel Richardson, Printer and Novelist* (Chapel Hill, 1936), pp. 43–106.

3. *Clarissa* (London, 1932), III, 29.

4. *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review* (London, 1844), I, 321–322.

5. "Life," prefixed to *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (London, 1804), I, xx.

6. *The English Novel* (London, 1913), pp. 86–87.

7. *De l'Allemagne,* in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1820), XI, 86–87.

8. London, 1939, p. 313.

9. *De l'Allemagne,* p. 87.

10. See O. H. K. Spate, "The Growth of London, A.D. 1660–1800," *Historical Geography of England,* ed. Darby (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 529–547.

11. Marjorie Plant, *The English Book Trade* (London, 1939), p. 86.

12. See, for example, T. F. Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (London, 1951), pp. 300–308.

13. No. 403 (1712); see also Fielding, *Covent Garden Journal,* No. 37 (1752).

14. Max Beloff, *Public Order and Public Disturbances, 1660–1714* (London, 1938), p. 28.

15. I base the ensuing generalizations mainly upon the area of agreement indicated in Louis Wirth's sociological analysis in "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology,* XLIV (1938), 1–24, and Lewis Mumford's imaginative and historical treatment in *The Culture of Cities* (1938). I should perhaps make clear that no comparative evaluation of the urban as opposed to the rural way of life is intended here: the stability of the latter, for example, may well be a euphemism for what Marx and Engels once so impoliticly characterized as "the idiocy of rural life."

16. Spate, "Growth of London," p. 538.

17. "A Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners," 1709, *Prose Works,* ed. Davis (Oxford, 1939), II, 61.

18. Bishop Sherlock's phrase (1750), *cit.* E. Carpenter, *Thomas Sherlock* (London, 1936), p. 284.

19. *Cit.* W. E. Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1878), II, 580.

20. Reddaway, *Rebuilding of London,* p. 294.

21. For example, John Gay, *Trivia,* 1716; Richard Burridge, *A New Review of London,* 1722; James Ralph, *The Taste of the Town: or A Guide to all Public Diversions,* 1731; and see also Paul B. Anderson, "Thomas Gordon and John Mottley, *A Trip through London,* 1728," *PQ,* XIX (1940), 244–260.

22. *Clarissa,* I, 353, III, 505, 368, I, 422; see also III, 68, 428.

23. P. 54.

24. See Ambrose Heal, "The Numbering of Houses in London Streets," *N. & Q.,* CLXXXIII (1942), 100–101; Sir Walter Besant, *London in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1925), 84–85, 88–101, 125–132; M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century,* (London, 1925), pp. 99–103.

25. *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson,* ed. A. L. Barbauld (London, 1804), IV, 79–80, I, clxxix, III, 225.

26. *Clarissa,* IV, 538.

27. *Correspondence,* IV, 290–291.

28. *Richardson* (London, 1928), p. 27.

29. *Letters of Doctor George Cheyne to Richardson, 1733–1743,* ed. C. F. Mullett (Columbia, Mo., 1943), pp. 34, 59, 61, 109, 108.

30. *Correspondence,* IV, 30.

31. London, 1930, pp. 57–58.

32. *Letters of D. H. Lawrence,* ed. Huxley (London, 1932), p. 614.

33. Ch. 31.

34. Edinburgh, p. 3.

35. George, *London Life,* p. 329.

36. *Kalm's Account of His Visit to England . . . ,* trans. Lucas (London, 1892), p. 36.

37. *Cit.* McKillop, *Richardson,* p. 202.

38. *Culture of Cities* (London, 1945), p. 215.

39. *Pamela* (London, 1928), Pt. II, p. 2.

40. *Correspondence,* III, 252–253.

41. Letter to Miss G[rainger], Jan. 22, 1750, in *N. & Q.,* 4th ser., III (1869), 276.

42. Howard Robinson, *The British Post Office: A History* (Princeton, 1948), pp. 70–103.

43. *Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,* ed. Lord Wharncliffe (London, 1861), I, 24.

44. *Correspondence,* I, liii.

45. Ibid., VI, 120.

46. Ibid., I, clxxxi.

47. *Cit.* Clara L. Thomson, *Samuel Richardson: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London, 1900), p. 110.

48. *Correspondence,* III, 247, 245.

49. *Clarissa,* II, 431.

50. See G. F. Singer, *The Epistolary Novel* (Philadelphia, 1933), esp. pp. 40–59; F. G. Black, *The Epistolary Novel in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Eugene, Oregon, 1940); and for the European background Charles E. Kany, *The Beginnings of the Epistolary Novel in France, Italy and Spain* (Berkeley, 1937).

51. *Clarissa,* IV, 375.

52. Oct. 27, 1777.

53. The Everyman and many other editions do not reprint the prefatory matter of the novels, nor the important Postscript of *Clarissa.* Quotations here are from the Shakespeare Head Edition (Oxford, 1930).

54. *Letters of William Shenstone,* ed. Duncan Mallam (Minneapolis, 1939), p. 24.

55. *Clarissa,* IV, 495.

56. *Correspondence,* I, clx.

57. I, 356, 6, 8.

58. *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa and Pamela . . .* By a Lover of Virtue, 1754, p. 4. Shenstone parodied Richardson's neologisms in the passage cited above, which contains the first use of 'scrattle' recorded in the *O.E.D.*

59. Letter to David Mallet, 1753; *cit.* McKillop, *Richardson,* p. 220.

60. *Familiar Letters on Important Occasions,* 1741, Letter 141; the first reference given in the *O.E.D.,* also by Richardson, is from *Grandison.*

61. *Sir Charles Grandison* (London, 1812), VI, 126.

62. *Politics,* Bk. VII, ch. 4, sects. ii–xiv.

63. *Culture of Cities,* pp. 355–357.

64. "Prévost's Translations of Richardson's Novels," *Univ. California Pubs. in Modern Philology,* XII (1927), p. 389.

65. *Clarissa,* III, 209; IV, 530.

66. *The Winter's Tale,* Act IV, sc. iv.

67. Part I, ch. 32.

68. *Correspondence,* I, lxxvi.

69. *Clarissa,* IV, 184, 19–26.

70. Bernard Mandeville, "Remark C," *The Fable of the Bees,* ed. F. B. Kaye (Oxford, 1924), I, 66.

71. *Cit.* Dobson, *Richardson,* pp. 100–101.

72. Ed. Shawcross (Oxford, 1907), I, 34, n.

73. See Prefaces, *Portrait of a Lady, Wings of the Dove* (*Art of the Novel,* ed. Blackmur (London, 1934), pp. 46, 306).

74. *Pamela,* 2nd ed., 1741, I, xxx.

75. Richardson, *Correspondence,* II, 18.

76. *Œuvres,* ed. Billy (Paris, 1946), pp. 1091, 1090, 1093.

77. On this see G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago, 1934), esp. pp. xvi–xxi, 134–138, 173, 257.

78. *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* ch. 9.

79. *Letters to Richardson,* pp. 68–69.

80. "Introduction to These Paintings," *Phoenix,* ed. MacDonald (London, 1936), p. 552.

81. "A Large Account of Taste in Poetry," *The Critical Works of John Dennis,* ed. E. N. Hooker (Baltimore, 1939), I, 284.

82. *Correspondence,* V, 146.

83. *Pamela,* I, 68.

84. *De l'Allemagne,* p. 84.

85. *Culture of Cities,* p. 271.

19

Nancy Armstrong

From Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel

From the beginning, domestic fiction actively sought to disentangle the language of sexual relations from the language of politics and, in so doing, to introduce a new form of political power. This power emerged with the rise of the domestic woman and established its hold over British culture through her dominance over all those objects and practices we associate with private life. To her went authority over the household, leisure time, courtship procedures, and kinship relations, and under her jurisdiction the most basic qualities of human identity were supposed to develop.

To consider the rise of the domestic woman as a major event in political history is not, as it may seem, to present a contradiction in terms, but to identify the paradox that shapes modern culture. It is also to trace the history of a specifically modern form of desire that, during the early eighteenth century, changed the criteria for determining what was most important in a female. In countless educational treatises and works of fiction that were supposedly written for women, this form of desire came into being along with a new kind of woman. And by representing life with such a woman as not only desirable but also available to virtually anyone, this ideal eventually reached beyond the beliefs of region, faction, and religious sect to unify the interests of those groups who were neither extremely powerful nor very poor. During the eighteenth century, one author after another discovered that the customary way of understanding social experience actually misrepresented human value. In place of the intricate status system that had long dominated British thinking, these authors began to represent an individual's value in terms of his, but more often in terms of *her,* essential qualities of mind. Literature devoted to producing the domestic woman thus appeared to ignore the political world run by men. Of the female alone did it presume to say that neither birth nor the accoutrements of title and status accurately represented the individual; only the more subtle nuances of behavior indicated what one was really worth. In this way, writing for and about the female introduced a whole new vocabulary for social relations, terms that attached precise moral value to certain qualities of mind.

It was at first only women who were defined in terms of their emotional natures. Men generally retained their political identity in writing that developed the qualities of female subjectivity and made subjectivity a female do-

main. It is fair to say that Sterne's heroes, like Fielding's Joseph Andrews, clearly declared themselves anomalous when they inverted the model and, as males, experienced life as a sequence of events that elicited sentimental responses. In this respect, they came to the reader in a form considered more appropriate for representing a female's experience than that of a male. In nineteenth-century fiction, however, men were no longer political creatures so much as they were products of desire and producers of domestic life. As gender came to mark the most important difference among individuals, men were still men and women still women, of course, but the difference between male and female was understood in terms of their respective qualities of mind. Their psychological differences made men political and women domestic rather than the other way around, and both therefore acquired identity on the basis of personal qualities that had formerly determined female nature alone. During the course of *Wuthering Heights,* for example, one can see Heathcliff undergo a transformation that strips away the features of a Gypsy from Liverpool at the turn of the century and attributes all his behavior to sexual desire. By a similar process, Rochester loses his aristocratic bearing by the end of *Jane Eyre* to assume a role within a purely emotional network of relationships overseen by a woman. It is only by thus subordinating all social differences to those based on gender that these novels bring order to social relationships. Granting all this, one may conclude that the power of the middle classes had everything to do with that of middle-class love. And if this contention holds true, one must also agree that middle-class authority rested in large part upon the authority that novels attributed to women and in this way designated as specifically female.

In demonstrating that the rise of the novel hinged upon a struggle to say what made a woman desirable, then, I will be arguing that much more was at stake. I will consider this redefinition of desire as a decisive step in producing the densely interwoven fabric of common sense and sentimentality that even today ensures the ubiquity of middle-class power. It is my contention that narratives which seemed to be concerned solely with matters of courtship and marriage in fact seized the authority to say what was female, and that they did so in order to contest the reigning notion of kinship relations that attached most power and privilege to certain family lines. This struggle to represent sexuality took the form of a struggle to individuate wherever there was a collective body, to attach psychological motives to what had been the openly political behavior of contending groups, and to evaluate these according to a set of moral norms that exalted the domestic woman over and above her aristocratic counterpart. I am saying the female was the figure, above all else, on whom depended the outcome of the struggle among competing ideologies.

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This book, which links the history of British fiction to the empowering of the middle classes in England through the dissemination of a new female ideal, necessarily challenges existing histories of the novel. For one thing, it insists that the history of the novel cannot be understood apart from the history of sexuality. In dissolving the boundary between those texts that today are con-

sidered literature and those that, like the conduct books, are not, my study shows that the distinction between literary and nonliterary was imposed retrospectively by the modern literary institution upon anomalous works of fiction. It shows as well that the domestic novel antedated—was indeed necessarily antecedent to—the way of life it represented. Rather than refer to individuals who already existed as such and who carried on relationships according to novelistic conventions, domestic fiction took great care to distinguish itself from the kinds of fiction that predominated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most fiction, which represented identity in terms of region, sect, or faction, could not very well affirm the universality of any particular form of desire. In contrast, domestic fiction unfolded the operations of human desire as if they were independent of political history. And this helped to create the illusion that desire was entirely subjective and therefore essentially different from the politically encodable forms of behavior to which desire gave rise.

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My point is that language, which once represented the history of the individual as well as the history of the state in terms of kinship relations, was dismantled to form the masculine and feminine spheres that characterize modern culture. I want to show that a modern, gendered form of subjectivity developed first as a feminine discourse in certain literature for women before it provided the semiotic of nineteenth-century poetry and psychological theory. It was through this gendered discourse, more surely than by means of the epistemological debate of the eighteenth century, that the discourse of sexuality made its way into common sense and determined how people understood themselves and what they desired in others. The gendering of human identity provided the metaphysical girders of modern culture—its reigning mythology. The popular concepts of subjectivity and sensibility resembled Locke's theory that human understanding developed through an exchange between the individual mind and the world of objects, an exchange that was mediated by language. But instead of a "soul"—Locke's word for what exists before the process of self-development begins—the essential self was commonly understood in terms of gender.[1] Conduct books for women, as well as fiction in the tradition of Richardson, worked within the same framework as Locke, but they constructed a more specialized and less material form of subjectivity, which they designated as female. If the Lockean subject began as a white sheet of paper on which objects could be understood in sets of spatial relations, then pedagogical literature for women mapped out a field of knowledge that would produce a specifically female form of subjectivity. To gender this field, things within the field itself had to be gendered. Masculine objects were understood in terms of their relative economic and political qualities, while feminine objects were recognized by their relative emotional qualities. At the site of the household, family life, and all that was hallowed as female, this gendered field of information contested a dominant political order which depended, among other things, on representing women as economic and political objects.

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To write an adequate history of domestic fiction, then, it seems to me that one must modify permanently what literary historians can say about history as well as about literature. Such scholars and critics collaborate with other historians, as well as with those who make it their business to appreciate high culture, when they locate political power primarily in the official institutions of state. For then they proceed as if there is no political history of the whole domain over which our culture grants women authority: the use of leisure time, the ordinary care of the body, courtship practices, the operations of desire, the forms of pleasure, gender differences, and family relations. As the official interpreters of the cultural past, we are trained, it appears, to deny the degree to which writing has concealed the very power it has granted this female domain. It is no doubt because each of us lives out such a paradox that we seem powerless to explain in so many words how our political institutions came to depend on the socializing practices of household and schoolroom. Yet, I contend, the historical record of this process is readily available in paperback. We call it fiction.

With this in mind, I have tried to defamiliarize the division of discourse that makes it so difficult to see the relationship between the finer nuances of women's feelings and the vicissitudes of a capitalist economy run mainly by men. My study identifies several places in cultural history where the one cannot be fully understood without the other. But I would still consider such an effort to be a frivolous demonstration of literary scholarship if it were not for the other people who are attempting to open new areas of culture to historical investigation and to provide some understanding of our own status as products and agents of the hegemony I am describing. In adopting various critical strategies, I have made no effort to be faithful to any particular theory. To my mind, such academic distinctions offer neither a trustworthy basis for making intellectual affiliations nor a solid basis for mounting an argument that concerns our own history. Rather than distinguish theory from interpretation and feminism from Marxism, deconstructionism, or formalism, I care mainly about those scholars and critics who have helped me to discover traces of the history of the present in several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts and to understand my own insights as part of the larger project now going on within those disciplines where individuals have undertaken the work of creating a new political literacy.

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This chapter will consider the domestic novel as the agent and product of a cultural change that attached gender to certain kinds of writing. Female writing—writing that was considered appropriate for or could be written by women—in fact designated itself as feminine, which meant that other writing, by implication, was understood as male. But female writing was not only responsible for the gendering of discourse; it was also responsible for representing sexual relations as something entirely removed from politics. As such, gender provided the true basis of human identity. By adopting the voices of women, such authors as Defoe and Richardson deliberately renounced what Walter Ong has described as "a sexually specialized language used almost ex-

clusively for communication between male and male." Until well into the nineteenth century, he points out, "learning Latin took on the characteristics of a puberty rite, a *rite de passage,* or initiation rite: it involved the isolation from the family, the achievement of identity in a totally male group (the social), the learning of a body of relatively abstract tribal lore inaccessible to those outside the group."[2] Men who lacked this specialized language were automatically placed outside the dominant class whenever they wrote. In assuming the guise of a woman, however, an author could avoid overtly disclosing his position as royalist or dissident. The female view was simply different from that of an aristocratic male and not likely to be critical of the dominant view. Fielding's uncouth heroes may generate a sense of political innocence by virtue of the gap between their education and the one their urbane author clearly possesses, but the explicitly female narrators of *Pamela, Evelina,* or *The Mysteries of Udolpho* are more effective in launching a political critique because their gender identifies them as having no claim to political power.

As women, furthermore, these protagonists understand social experience as a series of sexual encounters. Although characteristically naïve, their responses are far from simple. Indeed, they constitute a sophisticated range of sensations, emotional nuances, and moral judgments. Novelists could make a woman's response as flattering or caustic as they wished if the woman in question interpreted behavior on the basis of sexual rather than political or economic motivations. Domestic fiction mapped out a new domain of discourse as it invested common forms of social behavior with the emotional values of women. Consequently, these stories of courtship and marriage offered their readers a way of indulging, with a kind of impunity, in fantasies of political power that were the more acceptable because they were played out within a domestic framework where legitimate monogamy—and thus the subordination of female to male—would ultimately be affirmed. In this way, domestic fiction could represent an alternative form of political power without appearing to contest the distribution of power that it represented as historically given.

This was the difference between *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pamela,* then. Even Defoe could not write a successful sequel to his novel, and inasmuch as his masculine form of heroism could not be reproduced by other authors, we cannot say *Crusoe* inaugurated the tradition of the novel as we know it. By way of contrast, Richardson's story of relentless sexual pursuit and the triumph of female virtue proved infinitely reproducible. The differences between the political order Crusoe establishes in his solitary circumstances and the forces that drove him to the island in the first place have generated endless debate over Defoe's political beliefs. Not so with *Pamela.* The contradiction between her way of running the household and the way of the outside world was no doubt all too apparent at the time the novel was written. Fielding was not alone in accusing Richardson of playing fast and loose with social reality. He thought Richardson insulted the intelligence of readers by asking them to believe that a servant could dissuade a man of Mr. B's position from having his way with her. Fielding found it ludicrous to think that a man of such station would so overvalue the virginity of a woman who was not particularly well born. But despite the fact that Richardson's representation of the individual inspired

Fielding to write two novels in rebuttal, literary criticism has not seen fit to dwell on the political implications of the discrepancy between Mr. B's extraordinary desire for Pamela and the principles that apparently ruled behavior in Richardson's society.

From the nineteenth century on, critics have much preferred to regard *Pamela* as representing an enclosed and gendered self rather than a form of writing that helped to create this concept of the individual. As if this self alone of all things cultural were not subject to historical change, critics tend to read Pamela's sexual encounters as psychological rather than political events. Thus they can pass off the ideological conflict shaping the text as the difference between a man and a woman rather than between a person of station and a person of low rank. Writing apparently gained a certain authority as it transformed political differences into those rooted in gender. To the authority that came with concealing the politics of writing in this way we can attribute the development of a distinctively female form of writing. Despite charges of sentimentality and despite unsuccessful attempts such as Fielding's to place the novel in a masculine tradition of letters, novels early on assumed the distinctive features of a specialized language for women. A novel might claim a female source for its words, concentrate on a woman's experience, bear a woman's name for its title, address an audience of young ladies, and even find itself criticized by female reviewers.[3] Although concerned mainly with the vicissitudes of courtship and marriage, and fictional courtships and marriages at that, fiction that represented gender from this gendered viewpoint exerted a form of political authority.

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I am convinced that the household Richardson envisioned for Pamela has grown more powerful during the time that has passed between his day and ours. This is true not only because the self-enclosed family often conceals a host of abuses, but also because, with the emergence of the professional couple as an economic reality, gender roles have changed in significant ways. The ideal of domesticity has grown only more powerful as it has become less a matter of fact and more a matter of fiction, for the fiction of domesticity exists as a fact in its own right. It begins to exert power over our lives the moment we begin to learn what normal behavior is supposed to be. Whether or not we accept it as truth, this fiction alone enables very different individuals to sit down to dinner in entirely unfamiliar places without finding them particularly strange, to shuffle into classrooms with people they have never met and with whom they may have little else in common, and to enjoy melodramas and sitcoms produced in regions or even countries other than theirs. In this respect, the most powerful household is the one we carry around in our heads.

I feel this power keenly—the power of all the domestic clichés we have grown half-ashamed to live by. And I have tried to demonstrate how this power was given to women and exercised through them. To that end, I have used certain novels to explain how a notion of the household as a specifically feminine space established the preconditions for a modern institutional culture. I have argued that, in the hands of an intellectual such as Richardson,

the female was used to contest the dominant notion of kinship relations. The novel, together with all manner of printed material, helped to redefine what men were supposed to desire in women and what women, in turn, were supposed to desire to be. Sometime around the end of the eighteenth century, however, the novel took a rather different direction. In the hands of Burney and Austen, fiction could still be said to oppose the domestic woman to women of title and wealth, but a woman's behavior was even more likely to be impugned if it seemed to be motivated by desires that could also be attributed to the daughters of merchants and, later, to working-class girls. It is finally for their mercenary lust that the Bingley sisters strike us as less than desirable in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* and the same point is still more forcefully made in *Jane Eyre* by the acquisitive urge that attracts Blanche Ingram to Rochester and repels him from her.

With the novels of Burney and Austen, furthermore, the conduct-book ideal of womanhood provided the ideal against which novelistic representations of women asserted themselves as being more true to life. On the premise that no one really measured up to this ideal, Victorian fiction took on the task of retailoring the representation of women to indicate that each individual had slightly different desires; no two women could be right for the same man, nor any two men for the same woman. In Dickens, then, one finds that the ideal marriage is not represented as being anything more or less than a fiction. With remarkable regularity, the best possible sexual relationships to be achieved in his fiction turn out to be inferior substitutes for an original mother or father. As if to say that an idealized fiction of love had an unhealthy grip on human desire, Thackeray treats Amelia Sedley harshly for conforming to the feminine ideal and also punishes her husband Dobbin for confusing love with conformity. The novels by Dickens and Thackeray—and for that matter, all Victorian fiction—testified in one way or another to a power of sentimentality that Richardson could only imagine.

For a readership that understood the ideal woman as an imaginary construct, the fallen woman underwent a change of status as well. Every woman was, like Louisa Gradgrind, a little bit fallen. What mattered was that she never gave in to her own desire but waged an unrelenting battle against it. And so, as the nineteenth century got underway, the domestic woman no longer constituted a form of political resistance. She, rather than the aristocratic woman, represented the dominant view. But while there can be little debate in this regard about the angelic woman, is it possible to say, on the other hand, that women who did not fill the cultural mold—the madwomen and prostitutes of Victorian fiction—constituted a form of resistance? In discussing the rhetorical power that was exercised through monstrous representations of women, I have argued that the very aspects of the female which supposedly resisted acculturation came to play an especially powerful role in a discourse that redefined any form of political resistance as a form of individual pathology. To define political resistance in such psychological terms was to remove it from the snarl of competing social and economic interests in which every individual was entangled. Rather than oppose the domestic woman and the principle of gender differentiation that her very presence upheld, the mon-

strous woman of Victorian fiction was an agent in and product of an individuating process that taught people to forget how the motives and behavior of others expressed a political identity. How these mad, bad, and embruted women represented political differences is, I think, a more interesting question than how the fictional norms of femininity kept women in line. The question of what purpose was actually served by the women who did not aspire to the feminine ideal has bearing on how we regard the history of fiction, what we see its work to be, how we understand the relationship between women and fiction, and what we use fiction to say about women today.

I have insisted that the opposition of angel and monster was just that—an opposition within the discourse of sexuality. It provided a means of suppressing other oppositions. In fact, a central purpose of my argument has been to show how the novel exercised tremendous power by producing oppositions that translated the complex and competing ways of representing human identity into a single binary opposition represented by male versus female. All the different ways in which the conflict between Pamela and Mr. B might have been conceived—political complexities that Fielding's fiction tried and failed to restore—were first reduced to the conflict between male and female, which turned out to be no conflict at all. The nineteenth century was to simplify the political opposition further. It dealt with men and women who were never so far apart in social terms as Richardson's lovers. It concentrated on conflicts within the female character, between her innate desires and the role she was destined to occupy. Contained within a field where gender assumed priority over the signs of one's region, religious sect, and political faction, the domestic woman and her demonic "other" posed a psychological opposition. In political terms, however, monster and angel worked discursively as a team to suppress other notions of sexuality—namely, those attributed to the aristocracy and laboring classes—that did not adhere to the ideal of legitimate monogamy. By thinking in such oppositions, we ourselves have come to inhabit a political world composed not of races, classes, or even genders, but of individuals who in varying degrees earn or fail to earn our personal trust and affection. As the world around us acquires psychological complexity, political conflicts tend to appear simpler still.

I am suggesting that over time the novel produced a language of increasing psychological complexity for understanding individual behavior. I am suggesting, too, that as fiction progressively uncovered the "depths" of individual identity, a complex system of political signs was displaced. Signs of wealth, status, and religious affiliation began to define a "surface" that had no reliable connection with the self in which true motivations were buried. As the individual came to be known in this way, a modern form of power, which could not be distinguished from such knowledge, took over. People, at least the people who mattered, conceived themselves within a political reality comprising, on the one hand, an array of unique individuals and, on the other, a body of all individuals—an abstract and standardized body, rather than one that was heterogeneous and permeable.

We ourselves exercise this form of power in teaching students to read the novel as an account of a developing character, as the unfolding of historical

events that take place somewhere outside of language, or else as the growth of a verbal artifact. In each instance, we make the work of fiction transparent. In each instance, we teach our students to distinguish depth from surface in a way that turns writing into a specific form of individual, into a mirror of a particular world of objects, or into an autonomous world of imagination. Seldom are we moved to acknowledge how writing creates the distinction between depth and surface, subject and object, or between these and the literary forms of representation. In suppressing the fact and agency of writing, we also suppress the historical process by which these spheres of self, society, and culture were created and held in equilibrium. We place the relationship among these spheres—and thus the political power exerted by fiction—beyond our power to question.

Notes

1. In using the term "soul," Locke invokes the metaphysics of an earlier theocentric culture, but he does so in order to decenter that metaphysics and provide a material basis for individual consciousness. "I see no reason," he claims, "to believe that the soul thinks before the senses have furnished it with ideas to think on; and as those are increased and retained, so it comes, by exercise, to improve its faculty of thinking in the several parts of it; as well as, afterwards, by compounding those ideas, and reflecting on its own operations, it increases its stock, as well as facility in remembering, imagining, reasoning, and other modes of thinking." *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* vol. I (New York: Dover, 1959), p. 139. Locke therefore retains the term of an earlier metaphysics, but he uses it to describe subjectivity as a mode of production exactly analogous to the development of private property. It is fair to say, further, that when "soul" is supplanted by gender as the source and supervisor of the individual's development, the whole notion of subjectivity is no less metaphysical than it is in Locke's ungendered representation. The metaphysical basis for human identity—and the role of language in self-production—is simply less apparent as such.

2. Walter Ong, quoted by Irene Tayler and Gina Luria, "Gender and Genre: Women in British Romantic Literature," in *What Manner of Woman,* ed. Marlene Springer (New York: New York University Press, 1977), p. 100.

3. In *A Literature of Their Own* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), Elaine Showalter explains how by the 1860s, a number of prominent women authors had worked their way into editorial positions that, "like the one Dickens and Thackeray occupied at *Household Words* and the *Cornhill,* provided innumerable opportunities for the exercise of influence and power" (p. 156). The role of the critic-reviewer was not completely unknown to women even during the eighteenth century. See, for example, Elizabeth Montagu's *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760) and Anna Seward's critical essays in *Variety* (1787–88), in Ioan Williams, *Novel and Romance: 1700–1800, A Documentary Record* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), pp. 222–29, 357–66.

20

Gillian Brown

From Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America

Introduction

The title of this study joins two heretofore rarely linked traditions: nineteenth-century domestic ideology and possessive individualism. In proposing this conjunction I mean to illuminate the character and function of the nineteenth-century rise of domesticity as a development within the history of individualism. To see domestic ideology as a passage in liberal humanism is not simply to acknowledge the historical and philosophical contexts of this ideology of femininity and personal life. This historicization also, and to my mind more significantly, demonstrates the role of domestic ideology in updating and reshaping individualism within nineteenth-century American market society.

It is the organizing premise of this book that nineteenth-century American individualism takes on its peculiarly "individualistic" properties as domesticity inflects it with values of interiority, privacy, and psychology. I shall be concerned with these domestic dimensions of individualism and individualistic functions of domesticity as they appear primarily but not exclusively in 1850s' novels, stories, and essays by Stowe, Hawthorne, and Melville, as well as in other cultural forms and practices such as abolitionism, interior decorating, architecture, mesmerism, communitarian reform, child-rearing, and even illness. Reading these various forms as definitions and redefinitions of selfhood reveals a self continually under construction, or at least renovation. And the materials that become the features of the self—its properties—thus represent a history of proprietorship and invention, the processes of ownership and production sustaining the self.

The reconstructions of the individual analyzed in the readings that follow assume, extend, and sometimes alter the logic of possessive individualism. C. B. Macpherson has identified the "possessive" nature of the individualism associated with the rise of the liberal democratic state. According to this concept of self evolving from the seventeenth century, every man has property in himself and thus the right to manage himself, his labor, and his property as he

wishes. As Macpherson stresses, this is a market society's construction of self, a self aligned with market relations such as exchange value, alienability, circulation, and competition.[1] Though the term *individualism* does not come into use until the late 1820s,[2] when market society and forms of the modern liberal state are well established, the principles it encompasses were already instated. That is, by the mid-eighteenth century the notion of individual rights promulgated in the political philosophies of Hobbes and Locke comprised an article of cultural faith. Drawing on this tradition, the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution extended property rights to include self-representation and designed a government which would protect this democratic right to self-determination.

Welded to the market activities generally available only to white men, possessive individualism obviously reflects a masculine selfhood. Yet in the nineteenth century, this form of individualism comes to be associated with the feminine sphere of domesticity.

Visiting the United States in the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville observed disapprovingly that American democracy nurtured an individual whose "feelings are turned in upon himself." Tocqueville elaborated the domestic accents of this self-interest: "Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the rest of society to take care of itself."[3] What concerns Tocqueville here is what he takes to be the withdrawal from political and civic responsibilities that underwrites individualism—its domestic constitution. I shall return later to his assumptions about the isolationism of domesticity; for the moment I want to pursue how Tocqueville's characterization of domesticity as a withdrawn "little society" to which "feeling" "disposes" the individual echoes the nineteenth-century rhetoric of home as a "haven in a heartless world."[4]

The domestic circle in which Tocqueville locates American individualism emerged as a sphere of individuality in tandem with market economy expansion. Domestic ideology with its discourse of personal life proliferates alongside this economic development which removed women from the public realm of production and redirected men to work arenas increasingly subject to market contingencies. To counter "this perpetually fluctuating state of society," Catharine Beecher exhorted women to "sustain a prosperous domestic state."[5] The domestic doctrine Beecher helped to define held women and the home as the embodiment and the environment of stable value. Maintaining a site of permanent value, the domestic cult of true womanhood facilitated the transition to a life increasingly subject to the caprices of the market. The confidence of encomiums to the virtues of womanhood and home simultaneously sublimated and denied anxieties about unfamiliar and precarious socioeconomic conditions and about the place of the individual within those conditions. In the midst of change the domestic sphere provided an always identifiable place and refuge for the individual: it signified the private domain of individuality apart from the marketplace.[6]

What I am calling domestic individualism thus denotes a self-definition secured in and nearly synonymous with domesticity. The nineteenth-century

self-definitions this book explores locate the individual in his or her interiority, in his or her removal from the marketplace. Hence Stowe can identify the fate of slaves and the power of women with the state of home, political economy with domestic economy. Hawthorne likewise imagines good housekeeping as self-protective and revivifying. From a somewhat different perspective, Melville alternately images domestic influence as self-constricting and as not self-constricting enough. This theme is taken up by Charlotte Perkins Gilman at the end of the century in "The Yellow Wallpaper" and *Women and Economics,* which critique the domestic confinement of women and advocate their free circulation in spheres of their choosing. Although the feminist critique of domestic ideology rejects the situation of women in the home, it nonetheless retains in its aspirations for women's enfranchisement and self-determination the domestic definition of self. Arguing in 1892 for woman suffrage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton reproduces this composite of the individual when she aligns women's "birthright to self-sovereignty" with the fundamental "solitude of self" "our republican idea" of "the individuality of each human soul" constitutes. Nowhere is the tradition of self-proprietorship more alive than in Stanton's belief that "to deny the rights of property is like cutting off the hands."[7] The faculties of hands, which dictionary definitions list as those of grasping, producing, possessing, controlling, and authorizing, recapitulate the proprietary character of individualism.

Since domesticity secures this character for the individual, its selective allotment of rights and places in society is the real target of the feminist domestic critique. This means that women in the nineteenth century are in the peculiar position of wanting to be in a sphere they already both do and do not inhabit. For if the individual rights Stanton wants for women—"the rights of property," "political equality," "credit in the marketplace," "recompense in the world of work," "a voice in choosing those who make and administer the law"—by definition reside in domesticity,[8] the domestic sphere seems, then, to be the best place for women. The domestic confinement feminists protest should guarantee the democratic rights they want. This is precisely the logical maneuver by which opponents of woman suffrage were able to argue that women's rights existed in their domestic sphere, rationalizing the illogic of women's disenfranchisement by appealing to the entitling function of domesticity.

What the feminist movement for women's political and economic autonomy highlights, therefore, is the sexual division of individualism within domesticity.[9] This domain is at once the separate sphere of women and the correlative to, as well as the basis of, men's individuality. It is thus the case that the nineteenth century advanced and delimited individualism by identifying self-hood with the feminine but denying it to women. What women wanted was, quite literally, themselves. This paradoxical feminization of self that excludes as it encompasses women shapes the well-worn gender distinctions deeded to us by the nineteenth century. The measure of its success as a model of the subject can be indicated by the persistence with which the domestic and the individualistic have figured in American literary tradition as antinomies, despite Tocqueville's recognition of their alignment.

Individualism and domesticity have both long figured as thematics of

nineteenth-century American culture, but as distinct and oppositional trajectories. Thus two disparate literary movements seem to emerge in the 1850s: on the one hand the American Renaissance, represented in the "classic" works of Emerson, Whitman, Hawthorne, Melville, and Poe;[10] and on the other hand the Other American Renaissance, inscribed in the works of Stowe and such writers as Susan Warner, Fanny Fern, Harriet Wilson, and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, who are only recently receiving the critical attention long given their white male contemporaries.[11]

This gender division has persisted with remarkable neatness and clarity throughout American literary criticism. Recall how myths of the origins of American culture describe second-generation Adamic and oedipal stories: new Edens, sons in exile, estrangement from women. According to Leslie Fiedler, "the figure of Rip Van Winkle presides over the birth of the American imagination, and it is fitting that our first successful home-grown legend memorialize, however playfully, the flight of the dreamer from the shrew."[12] In this androcentric, if not misogynist, account of American culture, literature records the battle between the masculine desire for freedom and the feminine will toward civilization: the runaway Huck Finn versus the "sivilizing" Widow Douglas. The paradigm of the dreamer's flight from the shrew defines the domestic as a pole from which the individual must escape in order to establish and preserve his identity. Huck lights out for the territory in order to avoid what Ann Douglas calls "the feminization of American culture," to flee from the widow's sentimental values that epitomize, in Henry Nash Smith's words, "an ethos of conformity."[13]

Feminist reinterpretations of the domestic dispute this scenario by reversing its terms, making the domestic figure herself a runaway, a rebel. According to the new feminist literary history, women figured in the American imagination not as shrews to be dreamed away, but as producers and embodiments of the American dream of personal happiness. In the feminist exegesis of American cultural archetypes, the housewife, whom the prototypical canonical literature (and criticism) would evade, signifies a reformist rather than conformist ethos. As the Angel in the House, the woman at home exemplified ideal values and presided over a superior, moral economy. In sentimental literature, as Nina Baym puts it, "Domesticity is set forth as a value scheme for ordering all of life, in competition with the ethos of money and exploitation that is perceived to prevail in American society." Dedicated to "overturning the male money system as the law of American life," domesticity constitutes an alternative to, and escape from, the masculine economic order.[14]

Against the self-interest of the typically male individualism Tocqueville analyzed, the subculture women image is based on self-denial and collectivity—the ethos of sympathy customarily and disparagingly called sentimentalism. In this view, women thus claim and typify an anti-market (if not anti-masculine) individualism. Contrary to Tocqueville's narrow account of domesticity as the depoliticization of the individual, such domestic novels as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* demonstrate that the alignment between individualism and domesticity might structure dispositions other than self-interest, such as self-denial and self-protection.

Building upon and complicating feminist revisionary treatments of domestic ideology in the first part of this book, I trace through "Stowe's Domestic Reformations" a nineteenth-century update of possessive individualism, the domestic enclosure of the rights of women and blacks. But my argument in these chapters, as well as in the others that engage other aspects of self-sovereignty in literature not generally considered "domestic," contextualizes rather than confirms the feminist reversal of canonical theories of American literature.

Indeed, as I have been thus far suggesting, the feminist restoration of a domestic reform tradition displays the limitations of a masculinist critical practice, but hardly amounts to a reversal of nineteenth-century American male individualism. For the account of market manhood to which domestic reformers object images a self by definition already domesticated, insofar as its character is secured and authenticated by the domestic ideology of home. Conceived as withdrawn to himself, the individual shares the definitive principle of domesticity: its withdrawal from the marketplace. While women's deployment of domestic ideology directs it to genuinely reformist ends and counters prevailing dispositions of power that disenfranchise women, their domestic reforms, instead of projecting an antithetical model of selfhood, further domesticate an already domesticated selfhood. Moreover, as will become manifest in the readings of Hawthorne and Melville, the androcentric bias in American literary criticism is integrally related to and rooted in domestic ideology. To think of the domestic as reformist or revolutionary, therefore, is to register only one of its operations.

Focusing on texts in dialogue with their immediate culture and their larger cultural traditions, I mean to demonstrate a scope of domestic ideology hitherto unacknowledged even by feminist studies that link the domestic to a conception of female selfhood. Far from an account of the female subject, domesticity signifies a feminization of selfhood in service to an individualism most available to (white) men. This means that domesticity doubly binds, in obviously different ways, men and women, blacks and whites, to the same self-definition. From various perspectives and to varying degrees, nineteenth-century American literature reflects and helps to shape or alter this definition. I therefore make no attempt to distinguish between classic and feminist or revisionary American literary canons. I have chosen texts that may or may not fit these categories (in some cases previously unread materials) for their various expositions of the problematic of domestic individualism.

My study provides no schematic configuration or specific theory of American literature. Rather, it emphasizes the convergence of literary works with social practices as a way of underscoring the depth and breadth of imaginative work that literary artifacts and social formations such as domesticity and its representations perform. The readings I present, though generally historical, are occasionally also speculative, moving forward in time, sometimes into the present. In the final chapter, for example, I read "Bartleby the Scrivener" alongside "The Yellow Wallpaper" and an 1870 story from *Godey's Lady's Book,* explicating the agoraphobic logic of these fictions, which anticipates our contemporary accounts of both agoraphobia and anorexia. By relating the

connections among these various forms and by pursuing these relations across centuries, I mean to suggest, not just the imaginative productivity of domesticity, but the cultural endurance of domestic individualism and the power of American literature in promoting that tradition.

I have weighted this book with an insistence on convergences, on affiliations and shared identities such as the rather striking affinities between housekeeping and abolitionism, interior decorating and racism, architecture and romance, mesmerism and commerce, cannibalism and literary relations, anorexia and anti-consumerism. This generally deconstructionist approach obviously does not do away with distinctions as it uncovers the affinities among different categories. My emphasis is not meant in any way to deny differences, whether generic, racial, sexual, economic, or political, but to illuminate how the deployment of difference—in this case, the sexual and spatial divisions domestic ideology engendered—operates and gains force by concealing the common purposes that different or even oppositional objects or practices serve. In other words, I am interested in how domestic ideology, as a system of differences, works to maintain cultural coherence through differences.

At the same time, however, the fact that domestic ideology helps form cultural coherence does not mean that it represents a monolithic design. The domestic construction of individualism, as my readings will indicate, reflects myriad interests and historical particulars. For example, domesticity in the context of nineteenth-century abolitionism signifies a reformist politics, while in the context of woman's suffrage it appears as a reactionary institution. Though in these cases domesticity denotes certain political orchestrations, on the part of abolitionists or misogynists, this book does not unfold a unitary politics of domesticity: no single system emerges in the operations of the domestic. Its effectiveness as a strategy of self is just that: not a totalizing force, but a working machinery, one that has served and continues to serve many purposes.

In the succeeding chapters, the recurrent paradigm of difference that I shall be considering is the distinction between self and market, as well as its variant forms: home/market, body/market, mind/body, work/body.[15] There appear in these discussions themes, terms, and concepts made familiar by cultural critics from Marx to Veblen and from Benjamin to Baudrillard, and by psychoanalytic theorists from Freud to Lacan. Revisions and critiques of both these traditions, by contemporary feminists such as Sarah Kofman and Luce Irigaray, as well as by new materialists such as Elaine Scarry, Walter Benn Michaels, and Susan Stewart, also hover over and shape my readings of nineteenth-century domestic artifacts. These various (and sometimes vastly different) interpretive enterprises figure in my study not as theories that authorize my reading practice but as themselves practices, that is, as engagements with and formulations of the same problematics of self-definition I am treating. Moreover, one aim of my representational history of the domestic is to suggest some ways that domestic formations have worked to set in place the conceptions of identity and work that materialists and psychoanalysts have classified and theorized.

As this book explores how the individual and ideas of the individual incorporate economic realities, the vocabularies of economic and psychoana-

lytic analyses often merge. The conventional limits of such terms as economy, psychology, or domesticity mark the delineations between public and private life that domestic ideology so effectively implements. Indeed, the domestic processes through which the nineteenth-century individual internalized as well as distinguished himself from market capitalism dissolve the definition of economy as the political economy in which the individual lives. In my presentation of the cohabitation of the individual with the economic, material conditions and mental states accordingly coalesce. Chapter 3, for instance, examines in part the relation between housework, hysteria, and alienation; chapter 6 investigates consumerist domesticity, agoraphobia, and anorexia. This investigation of domestic ideology thus delineates both the complexity and the contingency of cultural forms.

Finally, what is made can be made or arranged otherwise, or even disposed of, but disposal of artifacts, we now have urgent reason to know, creates new problems and dangers. The self-protective scope continually adjusted by new individualistic forms, however, might lead us to find new and safer ways of self-definition and disposal. It is in the reformulation and manipulation of domestic boundaries, after all, that the self this book studies both changes and endures.

Notes

1. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

2. This dating is based on the Oxford English Dictionary's attribution of the first use of the term *individualism* to Tocqueville in 1835, and on other reports discovering the term in the 1820s. Niklas Luhmann, "The Individuality of the Individual: Historical Meanings and Contemporary Problems," in Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna, and David E. Wellbery, eds., *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 313–25; K. W. Swart, "'Individualism' in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (1826–1860)," *Journal of the History of Ideas 23* (1962): 77–90; Stephen Lukes, *Individualism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

3. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* vol. 2, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J. P. Mayer (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1969), 506–7.

4. I borrow this phrase from the title of Christopher Lasch's *Haven in a Heartless World* (New York: Basic Books, 1977). In this study Lasch takes domestic rhetoric quite literally as he defends domesticity as the last refuge from capitalistic progress. I shall be demonstrating throughout this book that domestic values are in fact integral to capitalist development.

5. Catharine Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841; rpt. New York: Schocken, 1977), 18, 14.

6. Recent comprehensive studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century capitalism demonstrate an integral relation between the emergence of domestic ideology and the expansion of capitalism. See Julie Matthaei, *An Economic History of Women in America: Women's Work, the Sexual Division of Labor, and the Development of Capitalism* (New York: Schocken, 1982); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Ideological Basis of Domestic Economy: The Representation of Women and the Family in the Age of Expansion," in Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital:*

Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 299–336.

7. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Solitude of Self," address before the United States Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage, Feb. 20, 1892. Reprinted in Mari Jo Buhle and Paul Buhle, eds., *The Concise History of Woman Suffrage: Selections from the Classic Work of Stanton, Anthony, Gage, and Harper* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 325–27.

8. Stanton, "Solitude," 326.

9. For an interesting account of nineteenth-century feminism as a critique of possessive individualism, see William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union: The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

10. Although Matthiessen does not include Poe among the literary representatives of the American Renaissance, I do, because his works are regularly studied in classes on antebellum American literature. Matthiessen's reason for the exclusion—that Poe did not represent democratic sentiments—can easily be dismissed. From the perspective of domestic individualism, Poe's extenuations of psychic states fit perfectly within the democratic value of self-cultivation. Matthiessen himself cannot fully deny Poe, but regularly invokes him as a contrast to Hawthorne: F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

11. Jane P. Tompkins coined the term "the Other American Renaissance" in her examination of Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (*Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987]; also published in Walter Benn Michaels and Donald Pease, eds., *The American Renaissance Reconsidered* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985]). Historian Mary Kelley calls this rise of women writers in America "literary domesticity": *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). I shall not be concerned here with the problems in women's literary careers that Kelley treats informatively, nor shall I be delineating the features of the Other American Renaissance. My exposition of domestic individualism, indeed, will suggest some of the problems in separating male and female traditions, a separation which itself reflects an effect of domestic ideology.

12. Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion, 1960), xx–xxi.

13. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977); Henry Nash Smith, "The Scribbling Women and the Cosmic Success Story," *Critical Inquiry* 1 (Sept. 1974): 47–70.

A few words are in order to clarify the difference between my premise of the nineteenth-century domestication of individuality and Douglas's thesis of the feminization of American culture. In proposing that individuality is aligned with and based on the feminine sphere, I am not suggesting that women direct the values of individualism or that the commercialism identified with domestic literature establishes "the anti-intellectual tradition in American culture." If American culture is feminized in the nineteenth century (and I share Douglas's belief that it is, while holding a different view of what that means—I do not see this as a degenerative movement), this feminization represents an androcentric society's deployment of as well as dependence on the domestic. And far from debasing intellectual activity, domestic individualism introduces new imaginative strategies of self-definition, exemplified in nineteenth-century fiction. My account of the feminized self to some extent follows from the traditional association of interiority with the female or feminine, described in Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*

(Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967); and more recently developed in Myra Jehlen, "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism," *Signs* 6 (Summer 1981): 575–601; Frances Ferguson, "Rape and the Rise of the Novel," *Representations* 20 (Fall 1987): 88–112; and Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

As Ferguson points out in her analysis of *Clarissa* and eighteenth-century rape laws, the psychological complexity of subjectivity that the novel represents does not make mental states transparent but, rather, institutes a contradictory relation between an individual's stipulated mental state and her actual one. Instead of expressing interiority, the novel form identifies the conflict between at least two accounts of self. So to propose, as Jehlen provocatively does, "that this interior life, *whether lived by a man or woman, is female*" is to shift focus to a resolution of identity. The identification of interiority with femininity, carefully studied in Armstrong's rereading of Watt and British fiction, emerges as a historical function: the rise of the domestic woman and the novels representing her facilitate and reflect new organizations of economy and class. I thus want to emphasize the feminization or, to be more precise, the domestication of self as a dynamic process, related to similar economic developments in America. Registered in American literature as an embattled individuality, this self consists in a state of conflict that resonates as much with the sets of contradictions we call male as with those we call female.

14. Nina Baym, *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820–1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 27; Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors," *American Quarterly* 33 (Summer 1981): 123–39. Besides Baym, Tompkins, and Kelley, a host of feminist critics have amplified the theme of an American female cultural tradition. See, for instance, Elizabeth Ammons, "Stowe's Dream of the Mother-Savior: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and American Women Writers before the 1920s," in Eric J. Sundquist, ed., *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 155–95; Annette Kolodny, *The Land before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Cheryl Walker, *The Nightingale's Burden: Women Poets and American Culture before 1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); and, in a slightly different vein, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-century America," in her *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 53–76.

15. The prevalence of corporeality here exemplifies Sharon Cameron's point that American fictions seem preoccupied with conceptions of identity conceived in corporeal terms. Cameron particularizes the customary depiction, in American literature, of the self outside the confines of a social context into a concern with the "problems of human identity predicated in terms of the body": Sharon Cameron, *The Corporeal Self: Allegories of the Body in Melville and Hawthorne* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 6.

Part Nine

Subjectivity, Character, Development

The readings in this part, like those in the last, theorize the process of internalization broadly characteristic of the nineteenth-century novel. But if those concentrate primarily on matters of content, these address more directly the formal techniques of internalization.

Foremost among these is the narrative technique of "free indirect discourse,"[1] which Dorrit Cohn defines as "the technique for rendering a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration." An exclusively "literary" style, free indirect discourse was consolidated in the latter half of the eighteenth century but theorized (along with psychoanalysis and what Ortega calls[2] "imaginary psychology") only in the first years of the twentieth. As a method of internalization, free indirect discourse does not, strictly speaking, reach a "deeper" level of consciousness in characters than that already accessible through first-person narration (whether epistolary or autobiographical) and third-person "omniscience." Rather, the effect of greater interiority is achieved by the oscillation or differential *between* the perspectives of narrator and character, by the process of moving back and forth between "outside" and "inside," a movement that seems palpably to carve out a space of subjective interiority precisely through its narrative objectification. Free indirect discourse may therefore be understood as a concretization, at the micro-level of style and the sentence, of that (variously figured) condition of detachment or distance to which the theory of the novel is notably attentive. Its self-consciousness isn't limited to those of its usages that emphasize the "ironic" separation of narrator and character, as distinguished from those that emphasize their "sympathetic" proximity. Rather, the reflexivity of free indirect discourse is a matter of the differential oscillation itself, which is fundamental to all of its usages. (Contrast the "stream of consciousness" technique, whose structurally unmediated access to subjectivity puts a premium on the effect of representational transparency rather than reflexivity.) Integral to the novel, this condition of detachment or distance marks the formal continuity of the genre; the invention of free indi-

1. I use here the term most common in Anglophone criticism; compare the German *erlebte Rede* and the French *style indirect libre* (as well as Dorrit Cohn's "narrated monologue" and Ann Banfield's "represented speech and thought").

2. See *Notes,* above, pt. 5.

rect discourse marks a signal moment of historical discontinuity, when novel writers learn to match matter to form in a new way.

Cohn's lucid account, sensitive to the utility of figuration[3] in expressing the dialectical relation between sameness and difference entailed in free indirect discourse, emphasizes its capacity to keep two balls in the air at the same time: identity and identification, impersonation and mock-impersonation, sympathy and irony.[4] Simultaneously "concealing" and "revealing" itself, free indirect discourse encapsulates in miniature the dialectical impulse of the novel's ideological function. In clarifying the significance of the strictly "literary" character of free indirect discourse, Ann Banfield's linguistic approach also historicizes it, as a technique of narration, in relation to long-term changes in the technology of cultural production. This technological history broadly coincides (as other readings have already suggested) with the history of generic forms.

Orality or "reported speech" is dominated by the communicative function; literacy or "represented speech" "frees linguistic performance from the tyranny of the communicative function." In orality, the expressive function of speech—the articulation of a "self"—is tacit, "epistemologically distinguishable" but "inseparable" from the more dominant, communicative report of a "speaker" who is "present" in both senses of the term. By eliminating both speaker and hearer, writing transforms a tacit distinction into an explicit separation. The "self" expressed by writing, and the "now" entailed in its subjectivity, can be separated out from the temporal present of the speaker's act of representating that self. Free indirect discourse enacts this separability as a dialectic between the speaker's narration and the self's expression, a linguistic division of labor and knowledge to which Banfield attributes the first importance: "The moment which, in ushering in the era of writing, reveals the two sides of knowledge contained in language by separating them into the two sentences of narration, also engenders the modern division between history and consciousness, object and subject."

But the "moment" of free indirect discourse, specifiable to the European literatures between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, is chronologically determinate in a way that the recurrent and variable "moment" of literacy clearly is not. In having recourse to Noam Chomsky's postulate of a "universal grammar," Banfield accounts for this unevenness by positing, within language, an ongoing potentiality that becomes actualized only under certain conditions. In this sense, the "new" pre-exists its own emergence: "[W]hat creates the condition for a new form creates the conditions for the discovery of some property of universal grammar which remains hidden until the new form gives evidence of its existence."[5] The "moment" of free indirect discourse

3. Cohn cites the "optic, acoustic, geometric, textile, [and] erotic" figures for this relationship; compare her own figures of "seamless fusing," "superimposition," "suspension," "interweaving," and "blurring."

4. Cohn's use of the terms "parody" and "realism" diverges from my own in treating each as a single component of this dialectic rather than as a way of naming the dialectical process itself.

5. For related arguments see Lukács (citing Marx), *Historical Novel,* above, pt. 4; Ortega, *Notes,* above, pt. 5. In this way, the critique of teleology in (historical) knowledge—as an avoid-

therefore lies both in the potentiality of literacy as such and in its historical actualization, in "the transformation of western culture into a literate culture."[6]

Banfield's discussion usefully coordinates the invention of free indirect discourse with much that already has come up in the theory of the novel. It's not only that the technique chronologically "coincid[es] with the rise of the novel itself." Free indirect discourse overcomes the embeddedness of the "self" in collective culture by separating out hitherto "transparent" reflection from self-reflection (Lukács). It is the method of novelistic "description" or "presentation" as opposed to that of epic "narration," the method by which "character" is thrown into relief against the ground of "plot," by which "language renders its subjective aspects opaque" (Ortega). It is the means by which the subjectivity of the expressive function of language is "distanced from communication and made the object of a contemplative gaze," its existence "seized and subjected to a self-conscious, objective scrutiny only when it is separated from its human author and incarnated in the text" (Bakhtin). Finally, free indirect discourse provides the grammatical basis for the dialectical constitution of the public over against the private: "[T]o represent subjectivity is to express it—subjectivity is 'pressed out,' betrayed, made public, i.e., conveyed to another."[7]

Amélie Rorty's essay helps sophisticate the category of novelistic "character" by teasing out the several distinct categories—and historical shadings—that impinge upon and complicate its usage. Rorty practices a philosophical semantics whose conceptual logic, adumbrated and confirmed by the historical logic of a sociocultural unfolding, moves from distinction to separation, from embodiment to abstraction, from externality to internality. She begins where fully embodied "character" is precipitated out from "hero" or "protagonist" as a being whose traits "predictably and reliably" fulfill a prophetic or genetic type, insusceptible even of identity crisis because "they are not presumed to be strictly unified." "Figures," "characters writ large," "have the traits of their prototypes in myth or sacred script." But "[i]n contrast with the wholly external perspective on characters, the concept of a figure introduces the germ of what will become a distinction between the inner and the outer person." The theatrical and legal sources of "personality" emphasize a capacity for both choice and action. Christianity unifies these capacities and equalizes all persons according to the "ideal type by which all are judged." But capacities are not equally actualized; "the habits of action" diverge from "intention." "This separation marks the beginning of the separation of morality from practical

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able intrusion of subjectivity into objective study—is transformed into the embrace of teleology as the unavoidable engine of objectivity, the mandatory means by which the object of knowledge is constituted.

6. Banfield passes over what must be the crucial factor in this transformation, typography's exponential intensification of literacy's effect.

7. The relationship entailed in free indirect discourse may therefore be gendered as one between a public male narrative voice and a private female figural (or character) voice. More generally, critics have speculated (and disagreed) on the plausibility of gendering free indirect discourse itself as a "female" technique, as well as on other aspects of its ideological function: compare Margaret A. Doody, "George Eliot and the Eighteenth-Century Novel," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 35 (1980): 260–91; John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), ch. 7; Susan Sniader Lanser, *Fictions of Authority* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), ch. 4.

life. . . . No longer is the internal model derived from the external type; the external type becomes judged by the internal motive." "[C]arried to its logical extreme," personhood gives us the mind/body problem. This is also the beginning of "development, of discovered responsibility, fulfilled or failed," hence of the identity crisis, of "wondering who one *really* is."

"Person" becomes "self" when the criterion of appropriateness gives way to that of appropriation, when one's normative "properties" become not distinguishable "essences" but separable or alienable "possessions."[8] "[T]he crises of self-identity center on the alienation of properties," which becomes "an attack on the integrity if not actually the preservation of the self." But identity, first enabled by this objectification, ultimately is reconceived over against it. With the progressive reification of "properties," their alienation—their separation from oneself—comes to reinforce self-integrity rather than subvert it. At this point "selves" bleed into "individuals," whose rights and qualities "are their very essence, inalienable." Individual essence is fully disembodied, that which cannot be reified, a pristine realm of internal integrity which is in turn susceptible to ongoing division. This is the realm of the "subject," in Rorty's terms a Sartrean "I" reifiable through its own act of self-reflection, in Freud's terms a micro-rediscovery of the dialectic between inner and outer, latent and manifest, unconscious and conscious.[9] This dialectic is also rediscovered from the opposite or "macro-" direction. With individuality, "[t]he contrast between the inner and outer person becomes the contrast between the individual and the social mask." But "in the dialectic between individuality and community, there is the difficult balance between fulfillment and invasion."

Rorty's essay deepens our view of novelistic characterization as a hermeneutic oscillation between "trait" and "type," "personal" and "class individual,"[10] by specifying the subtle, and historically inflected, gradations that exist between distinct instances of such oscillation. It is of course suggestive that Rorty's examples are novels—also that she begins to adduce them only halfway through her analysis. For that reason her "earliest" category, "character," might seem the "wrong" term for what occurs in the belated genre of the novel. More persuasively, its use exemplifies the kind of "cross-classifications" intrinsic to categorial usage, which inevitably shows the "archeological traces" of what has come before and yet persists in the current constitution of the category.[11]

The novel has been theorized through its association with the synchronic

8. Here and elsewhere, Rorty's analysis is suggestive of the structuralist discrimination between rhetorical tropes of increasing detachment: identity, metaphor, simile, metonymy (see above, headnote to pt. 2). Compare also the psychoanalytic Robert (ch. 10): is this where the type of the Foundling gives way to that of the Bastard?

9. In political terms, the traditional distinction between "sovereign" and "subject" becomes a separation at the historical moment when the condition of "subjection" is sufficiently distanced to appear contingent, hence alterable. "Subjectivity" therefore bears the vestigial marks of will and agency proper to that which has self-consciously experienced "subjection."

10. See Hirsch, above, pt. 1; Lukács, *Historical Novel,* above, pt. 4.

11. With Rorty's "archeological traces" compare Jameson's "formal sedimentation," above, ch. 17.

emergence of a number of contextual categories: (the middle) class, the nation (-state), (the feminine) gender. Franco Moretti extends the argument of an ongoing internalization by approaching the *Bildungsroman* as the novelistic subgenre that "make[s] possible the Golden Century of Western Narrative" by making visible the category of "youth as such." Always biologically distinguishable, "youth"'s cultural and ideological separation out during the nineteenth century can be seen as a crisis of status inconsistency that rendered "problematic" what had been until then unmarked, "insignificant." What youth decisively signifies is modernity: dynamism, instability, formlessness, futurity. Implicit in Moretti's argument is the Lukácsian insight of a "double reflection" according to which modernity is to youth as form is to content. In concentrating upon youth the *Bildungsroman* thematizes its own (and its age's) formal preoccupation with novelty and the process of formation.

This is inevitably a process of "mobility," but also one of "interiority," the anticipatory restlessness of a search both beyond and within that ultimately entails the contradiction between "normality" and "individuality," "socialization" and "self-determination." By the same token, the *Bildungsroman* is "intrinsically contradictory" in its form. Just as "youth" necessarily calls up the specter of "maturity," so the impulse toward the "open-ended process" of "narrativity" depends upon a teleological closure whereby story succeeds only insofar as "it manages to *suppress itself as story.*"[12] Evoking Lévi-Strauss (and Freud before him), Moretti provides a strong version of the subgenre's ideological function. A "cultural mechanism capable of representing, exploring, and testing" this contradiction, the *Bildungsroman* undertakes "not to 'solve' the contradiction, but rather to learn to live with it, and even transform it into a tool for survival." Unexpectedly (given the dialectical subtlety of this argument), Moretti may appear to risk dichotomizing the subgenre's double reflection by parceling out one half of it to the French, and the other half to the English, strain of the *Bildungsroman.*[13] Also surprising is the historiography of rupture on which he relies in accounting for the transition from tradition to modernity: "Virtually without notice, in the dreams and nightmares of the so called 'double revolution' [the French and the Industrial?], Europe plunges into modernity."[14]

Where Moretti approaches nineteenth-century novelistic internalization as a subgeneric phenomenon, Clifford Siskin treats it as one manifestation of a transgeneric discursive "norm" that unites the genres of lyric poetry and the

12. Compare above, ch. 15, McKeon's dialectic of "naïve empiricism" and "extreme skepticism" (also on "status inconsistency"). Moretti's location of this dialectic in the *Bildungsroman* develops Lukács's notion that the novel overcomes the "bad infinity" of its formal "fluctuation" by thematizing it as biography (*Theory,* above, pt. 4).

13. Moretti's two strains may recall the imcommensurability of "soul" and "world" from which Lukács generates a two-part typology through a differential stress on each term (*Theory,* above, pt. 4).

14. Elsewhere Moretti elaborates this historiography on the model of evolutionary theory: see "On Literary Evolution," in *Signs Taken for Wonders,* rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1988), 262–78. Contrast Lukács's treatment of novelistic subgenre (the historical novel) as contextually, and hence formally, continuous with the novel as such (*Historical Novel,* above, pt. 4).

novel in the formal paradigm of "development."[15] Siskin is interested in development both on the micro-level of narrative form and on the macro-level of historiography. On both levels, he argues, "the possibility of radical difference is submerged in assumptions of continuity." From Austen's micro-developmental construction of plot and characters, Siskin suggests, we learned how to misread her as writing in a macro-developmental continuum with her predecessors. The normative conjunction of Austen with Wordsworth signifies, instead, "a discontinuous conceptual shift" from past practice.

Austen "naturalizes" change by representing characters as changing within an overarching developmental continuum. "The self made continuously deeper by interpretative revision became the psychologized subject." In the ideology of development Siskin addresses historical phenomena closely related to those Armstrong associates with the ideology of gender division. Providing demographic evidence in support of Moretti's thesis of an emergent "youth," Siskin suggests that the traditional ties of kinship were now undermined not only by those of class, but also by the life model of individual development, of "growing up." To know one's place, hitherto dependent on "external familial fact, was now . . . thought to be at least partially the result of a reflexive turn inward: the degree of self-knowledge. . . . As the product of an act of mind—'understanding'—social position was effectively psychologized into a state of mind." Austen sidesteps the traditional problem of status difference: "she psychologizes her characters' differences and posits a probable solution: development. They come to love each other."

Siskin's trenchant argument, broadly persuasive with respect to Austen's formal procedures, may be less so at the macro-level of literary history, where the limitations of his Foucauldian method become evident. Here we encounter the paradox of the "novel tradition." In order to argue Austen's "novelty," her utter discontinuity with what comes before, Siskin is obliged to flatten her predecessors, to find them devoid of those developmental properties that Austen is said to inaugurate. Recalling Frye's structuralism, Siskin restricts novelistic parody before Austen to the imitative pole. Moreover he selects as "representative" of her predecessors not the "developmental" *Pamela,* but a novel whose active critique of such tendencies in their ostentatious Richardsonian guise bespeaks not the innocence of pre-, but the skepticism of anti-developmental thinking.

To partake in the novel tradition, Austen's innovations must be made to cancel and incorporate those of Richardson and Fielding. Similarly, the vast infrastructural transformations that synchronically underwrite her innovative modernity are concentrated, like Moretti's "double revolution," into a few decades. Siskin avoids the ideology of development, it might be said, by falling into the ideology of modernity, of discontinuous innovation. In his account of it, the ideology of development has the absolute function of "naturalizing"

15. Compare Lukács, *Historical Novel,* where nineteenth-century novel and drama share a "historical character" unequally, so that drama of the period is subject to "novelization." Here it's lyric that seems to bear the major weight of "development"; hence the novel is seen to undergo a "lyricization" (above, pt. 4).

instability and change. Here Moretti's more dialectical version of ideological function may also be more persuasive. Ideology doesn't efface change or conflict; it plausibly re-presents it. Perhaps Austen's discourse of development is best seen not as a naturalizing erasure but as an internalizing absorption that enacts both continuity and discontinuity simultaneously.

21

Dorrit Cohn

From Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction

Narrated Monologue

Initial Description. In a German Naturalist story entitled *Papa Hamlet* (1889), which recounts the mental and physical decay of a Shakespearean actor, one finds the following passage:

> He had of late—but wherefore he knew not—lost all his mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it went so heavily with his disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seemed to him a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeared no other thing to him than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work was a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to him, what was this quintessence of dust? man delighted him not; no, nor woman neither.[1]

With the assistance of Shakespeare (Hamlet, II, 2) the translation is my own; it is no less exact than the "German Shakespeare" (the celebrated Schlegel-Tieck translation) which dictated every detail of this passage in the original. Every detail, that is, except its person and tense. For, as is immediately apparent, this is *Hamlet* with a difference: third-person pronouns have replaced first-person pronouns, the past tense has replaced the present. The result is not "Shakespeare" (a *quotation* of Hamlet's monologue[2]), but "narrated Shakespeare" (a *narration* of Hamlet's monologue). What is the meaning of this transformation?

The Shakespearean language in this passage cannot be attributed to the narrator of *Papa Hamlet,* who speaks—in the purely narrative portions of the text—the neutrally reportorial language typical for the narrator of a Naturalist story. His protagonist, by contrast, habitually declaims Shakespeare to himself and others, and by this professional deformation feeds his need to dramatize

and euphemize his sordid experiences. Even a reader of this story who has never heard of the technique of the "narrated monologue" will recognize that the above passage renders what Papa Hamlet thinks to himself rather than what his narrator reports about him. He will instinctively "redress" this text to mean that Papa Hamlet "thought to himself: 'I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth.'"

A transformation of figural thought-language into the narrative language of third-person fiction is precisely what characterizes the technique for rendering consciousness that will occupy us throughout this chapter, and that I call the narrated monologue. It may be most succinctly defined as the technique for rendering a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration. This definition implies that a simple transposition of grammatical person and tense will "translate" a narrated into an interior monologue. Such translations can actually be applied as a kind of litmus test to confirm the validity of a reader's apprehension that a narrative sentence belongs to a character's, rather than to a narrator's, mental domain.[3]

But before I discuss this and other critical problems attending the narrated monologue, I will add to the rather farfetched initial illustration others taken from the mainstream of the modern narrative tradition. They will show that, even when fictional characters have less idiosyncratic thinking styles than Papa Hamlet's, their narrated monologues are easy to identify. I provide a minimal context in each case, and italicize the sentences in narrated monologue form.

1. Woolf's Septimus in Regent's Park, after Rezia has removed her wedding ring:

> "My hand has grown so thin," she said. "I have put it in my purse," she told him.
>
> He dropped her hand. Their marriage was over, he thought, with agony, with relief. *The rope was cut; he mounted, he was free, as it was decreed that he, Septimus, the lord of men, should be free; alone (since his wife had thrown away her wedding ring; since she had left him), he, Septimus, was alone, called forth in advance of the mass of men to hear the truth, to learn the meaning, which now at last, after all the toils of civilisation—Greeks, Romans, Shakespeare, Darwin, and now himself—was to be given whole to. . . .* "To whom?" he asked aloud. [Woolf's ellipsis][4]

2. Kafka's K. walking through the night with Barnabas (the messenger from the castle):

> At that moment Barnabas stopped. *Where were they? Was this the end of the road? Would Barnabas leave K.? He wouldn't succeed.* K. clutched Barnabas' arm so firmly that he almost hurt himself. *Or had the incredible happened, and were they already in the Castle or at its gates? But they had not done any climbing so far as K. could tell. Or had Barnabas taken him up by an imperceptibly mounting road?* "Where are we?" asked K. in a low voice, more of himself than of Barnabas.[5]

3. Joyce's Stephen Dedalus waiting for confession:

> The slide was shot to suddenly. The penitent came out. He was next. He stood up in terror and walked blindly into the box.
>
> *At last it had come.* He knelt in the silent gloom and raised his eyes to the white crucifix suspended above him. *God could see that he was sorry. He would tell all his sins. His confession would be long, long. Everybody in the chapel would know then what a sinner he had been. Let them know. It was true. But God had promised to forgive him if he was sorry. He was sorry.* He clasped his hands and raised them towards the white form, praying with his darkened eyes, praying with all his trembling body, swaying his head to and fro like a lost creature, praying with whimpering lips.[6]

What the italicized portions of these passages most obviously share is that they cannot be read as standard narration. Narrative language appears in them as a kind of mask, from behind which sounds the voice of a figural mind. Each of its sentences bears the stamp of characteristical limitations and distortions: of Septimus' manic obessions, K.'s ignorance of present and future circumstance, Stephen's self-serving religiosity. Far more than in ordinary narrative passages, their language teems with questions, exclamations, repetitions, overstatements, colloquialisms. In short, neither the content nor the style of these sentences can be plausibly attributed to their narrators. But both their content and their style become entirely plausible if we understand them as transposed thought-quotations—which is why the "translation" test (as the willing reader can verify) will "work" in each case.

But the point is, of course, that the language a "translation" yields is *not* in the text. Nor are there other indications that someone is thinking. We are told not "Stephen said to himself: 'God can see that I am sorry. I will tell all my sins,'" but simply "God could see that he was sorry. He would tell all his sins." Stephen's personal rapport with the Divinity is treated *as if* he were formulating it in his mind, but the words on the page are not identified as words running through his mind.[7] By leaving the relationship between words and thoughts latent, the narrated monologue casts a peculiarly penumbral light on the figural consciousness, suspending it on the threshold of verbalization in a manner that cannot be achieved by direct quotation. This ambiguity is unquestionably one reason why so many writers prefer the less direct technique.

Another is the seamless junction between narrated monologues and their narrative context. Note how, in the Joyce passage, the text weaves in and out of Stephen's mind without perceptible transitions, fusing outer with inner reality, gestures with thoughts, facts with reflections, as report of posture and gaze—"he knelt . . . and raised his eyes"—gives way to the purely imaginary "God could see . . . God had promised," which in turn gives way to factual report—"He clasped his hands and raised them." By employing the same basic tense for the narrator's reporting language and the character's reflecting language, two normally distinct linguistic currents are made to merge.

The Kafka text alternates more rapidly, but no more perceptibly, between report and reflection: "At that moment Barnabas stopped. *Where were they?* . . . K. clutched Barnabas' arm so firmly that he almost hurt himself. *Or*

had the incredible happened . . . ?" By contrast when the very same question that begins the narrated monologue—"*Where were they?*"—is repeated at its end—"Where are we?"—it cuts off the unified current by direct quotation. Such sudden shifts to directly quoted discourse (silent or spoken) underline the potential-actual relationship between narrated monologue and verbal formulation, creating the impression that a mind's vague ruminations have irresistibly led to conceptual expression. We get the same pattern at the end of Septimus' narrated monologue, when an unfinished thought-sentence breaks into a quoted question: "*was to be given whole to* . . . 'To whom?' he asked aloud."

The beginning of the Woolf passage illustrates a different junction between narration and narrated monologue. In another standard pattern, a sentence of psycho-narration—"Their marriage was over, he thought, with agony, with relief"—shapes the transition from the preceding report to the narrated monologue, even as it sets the tone (of agony and relief) that reigns in Septimus's thoughts. As we already noted in the villanelle passage from Joyce's *Portrait* (in Chapter 1), psycho-narration flows readily into a narrated monologue, and the latter clinches the narrator-figure cohesion that the former approximates.

We can now profile the narrated monologue more sharply by examining its linguistic relationship with its closest relatives: first with the two rival techniques for rendering consciousness, second with the narration of fictional reality generally.

The demarcation between the narrated monologue and the two other techniques for rendering consciousness is generally easy to draw. Tense and person separate it from quoted monologue, even when the latter is used in the Joycean manner, without explicit quotation or introduction; the absence of mental verbs (and the resulting grammatical independence) separates it from psycho-narration. The following schema shows how the same thought-phrase would appear in the three techniques:

quoted monologue
(He thought:) I am late
(He thought:) I was late
(He thought:) I will be late

narrated monologue
He was late
He had been late
He would be late

psycho-narration
He knew he was late
He knew he had been late
He knew he would be late

A typical narrated-monologue sentence stands grammatically *between* the two other forms, sharing with quoted monologue the expression in the principal clause, with psycho-narration the tense system and the third-person reference.

When the thought is a question, the word-order of direct discourse is maintained in the narrated monologue, increasing its resemblance to quoted monologue and its distinction from psycho-narration:

quoted monologue
(He thought:) Am I late?

narrated monologue
Was he late?

psycho-narration
He wondered if he was late.

Minute as these differences may appear when schematized in this fashion, they reflect in simplest grammatical terms the basic relationship between the three techniques: in its meaning and function, as in its grammar, the narrated monologue holds a mid-position between quoted monologue and psycho-narration, rendering the content of a figural mind more obliquely than the former, more directly than the latter. Imitating the language a character uses when he talks to himself, it casts that language into the grammar a narrator uses in talking about him, thus superimposing two voices that are kept distinct in the other two forms. And this equivocation in turn creates the characteristic indeterminateness of the narrated monologue's relationship to the language of consciousness, suspending it between the immediacy of quotation and the mediacy of narration. Accordingly, its function fluctuates when it is found in the immediate vicinity of the other techniques: when it borders on psycho-narration, it takes on a more monologic quality and creates the impression of rendering thoughts explicitly formulated in the figural mind; when it borders on spoken or silent discourse, it takes on a more narratorial quality and creates the impression that the narrator is formulating his character's inarticulate feelings.

The problem of delimiting the narrated monologue from narration generally is far more complex, since purely linguistic criteria no longer provide reliable guidelines. Cloaked in the grammar of narration, a sentence rendering a character's opinion can look every bit like a sentence relating a fictional fact. In purely grammatical terms "He was late" (our sample sentence) could be a narrator's fact, rather than a character's thought. Within a broader context it might become possible to attribute it to a figural mind: for instance, if the next sentence belied the idea that "he was late"; or if the statement were embedded in a recognizable thought sequence. Woolf's "The rope was cut; he mounted; he was free" (in the passage quoted above) could, when taken out of context, be read as a narrator's description of a balloonist taking off for a flight. But in its context—the insane Septimus sitting on the Regent's Park bench, misinterpreting his wife's removal of her wedding ring—we understand these statements as the author means us to understand them, even before the following sentences more clearly signal monologic language. Obviously, an author who wants his reader to recognize a narrated monologue for what it is will have to plant sufficient clues for its recognition. These clues may be contextual, semantic, syntactic, or lexical, or variously combined.[8] A narrated monologue,

in other words, reveals itself even as it conceals itself, but not always without making demands on its reader's intelligence. The critic who suggested that the trial against Flaubert for *Madame Bovary* would not have taken place if the prosecutor had recognized that the "immoralities" it contained were Emma's narrated monologues rather than Flaubert's authorial statements may have overstated his case.[9] But there is no doubt that this kind of confusion is responsible for innumerable misreadings—including some in print—of works that employ the technique.

In sum, the narrated monologue is at once a more complex and a more flexible technique for rendering consciousness than the rival techniques. Both its dubious attribution of language to the figural mind, and its fusion of narratorial and figural language charge it with ambiguity, give it a quality of now-you-see-it, now-you-don't that exerts a special fascination. Even dry scholars wax poetical when they describe its effects. Here is an early German theorist's description: "It lights up with vivid hues a realm that the reporting and describing narrator deliberately tones down by keeping it at a distance from himself. And it creates this effect far more readily than a narrative containing occasional monologues, where a more perceptible contrast exists between pure report and quoted thought. Its stirring effect depends on the fact that it is barely discernible to the naked eye: the device is irresistible precisely because it is apprehended almost unconsciously."[10]

Theoretical and Historical Perspective. In both France and Germany—where it goes respectively by the names *style indirect libre* and *erlebte Rede*—the narrated monologue has been the subject of intensive discussions ever since it was first identified around the turn of the century.[11] The first students of the technique were grammarians and linguists, but—since literary scholarship in both these countries maintained a close relationship with philological studies—the phenomenon was soon discussed by such eminent literary scholars as Leo Spitzer, Oskar Walzel, and Albert Thibaudet.[12] In the fifties there was a marked revival of interest in the phenomenon in Germany, this time in the context of more theoretical discussions, as *erlebte Rede* came increasingly to be regarded as a key concept for generic definitions of fiction, typologies of the novel, the nature of narrative language, and the development of modern narrative practices.[13] In the recent writings of the French structural narratologists *style indirect libre* has played a less central role, perhaps because they have been more preoccupied with macro- than with micro-structures, and more with first- than with third-person forms of fiction. Still, it is a standard concept in French criticism today. Todorov, Genette, and others have variously related it to their central categories of *mode, aspect,* and *voix,* even if they have not yet given it the close attention it deserves in a systematic study of narrative discourse.[14]

An entirely different situation exists in Anglo-American criticism, where the narrated monologue has until recently been virtually ignored, and where it bears no standard name.[15] This neglect is especially surprising when we consider that an English writer was the first extensive practitioner of the form (Jane Austen), and that it has been the preferred mode for rendering con-

sciousness in the works of James, Lawrence, the early Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Wolfe et al. Even such sensitive theorists and historians of fiction as David Daiches, Ian Watt, or Scholes and Kellogg seem unaware of its existence, and Wayne Booth—though acquainted with the German term *erlebte Rede*—dismisses it as an unwonted stylistic nicety.[16] Not that the phenomenon has gone entirely unnoticed in individual texts: in a number of stylistically oriented studies one finds it aptly described, but always only as an idiosyncrasy of the particular writer or text under consideration. Here are three examples from James, Joyce, and Woolf criticism: For Gordon O. Taylor the method for rendering Isabel's thoughts in Chapter 42 of *The Portrait of a Lady* "although still cast in the third-person, [is] divested of most authorial trappings," and the "third-person intrusions approximate convincingly, though they fail to reproduce exactly, the links in her own train of thought."[17] William M. Schutte, citing what is clearly a narrated-monologue passage from Joyce's *Portrait,* describes it as a combination of "the unselected stream of Stephen's consciousness" and a "traditional third person summary account."[18] For David Daiches, Woolf's use of the technique in *Mrs. Dalloway* is a very special "compromise between reported thought and direct, unedited transcription of consciousness."[19] The similarity in the foregoing quotations is obvious, and should of itself suggest that James', Joyce's, and Woolf's specimens belong to the same species. Is it perhaps because he has no name for the beast that each critic assigns it to the special fauna of the text he is examining? A common label for so widespread a stylistic phenomenon would, at any rate, clarify critical discourse: the heuristic value of a standard literary term is precisely to identify an individual occurrence as an instance (and variation) of a general norm.

In recent years, British and American linguists, using mostly the translated French term "free indirect style," have given mounting attention to this literary technique, with some even regarding it as the most fertile meeting ground between linguists and literary scholars.[20] A number of less technical essays now exist in English as well, by literary critics familiar with the German and French background.[21] But the concept—no matter by which of its names—has yet to enter the everyday language of criticism in English.

My own term "narrated monologue" as an English equivalent for *style indirect libre* and *erlebte Rede* calls for some justification and qualification. The French and German terms have generally designated not only the rendering of silent thought in narrated form, but also the analogous rendering of spoken discourse, which displays identical linguistic features.[22] I have deliberately chosen a term that excludes this analogous employment of the technique, because in a literary—rather than a strictly linguistic—perspective the narration of silent thoughts presents problems that are quite separate, and far more intricate and interesting than those presented by its more vocal twin. "Narrated discourse" involves neither the ambiguity concerning the actual-potential status of language that characterizes the narrated monologue, nor the difficulties of recognizing it within its narrative context. It has seemed to me that so special a phenomenon deserves a separate name, a name that relates it to the other techniques for rendering consciousness, more nearly and more clearly than

other, more inclusive terms.[23] For the purposes of the present study, at any rate, the overarching concern with the presentation of figural minds prompted the more restrictive term.[24]

But the term "narrated monologue" is purposefully restrictive in yet another, more important sense: the denotative field of the French and German terms—and of their English equivalents—has, in recent years, grown far beyond the bounds of figural thought (and discourse) to include the entire realm of figural narration. Todorov has sketched its range of meanings as follows: "This term has been used to designate a family of phenomena which have common traits, but which nonetheless cannot be encompassed by a single definition. All cases of *style indirect libre* range between two limits: on the one side, a reported discourse that has the syntactic forms of indirect discourse, but that maintains certain characteristics of pragmatic speech; on the other side, a vision of reality that is not the narrator's own, but that of a fictional character, the so-called '*vision avec,*' which does not necessarily conform to precise linguistic criteria."[25] In its broadest meaning, then, at the second limit Todorov mentions above, *style indirect libre* becomes an alternate term for an entire mode of narration (*vision avec*—the term originally proposed by Pouillon—being roughly identical to figural narrative situation). It is this broad denotation that my more narrowly conceived term "narrated monologue" purposely excludes.[26] By implying the correspondence to a (potential) quoted monologue, the more specific name pinpoints a more specific "thing." And even though the line of demarcation between figural thought and its immediate context may not always be easy to draw in practice, the term "narrated monologue" suggests a method for discerning its location—or for explaining its effacement.

The terminological separation of this technique for rendering consciousness from the narrative situation with which it has become associated seems to me important for at least three different reasons. 1. Narrated monologues can—as we shall see—also occasionally be very ironically used in authorial narrative contexts, and though its effect varies with its surroundings, its basic structure remains the same. 2. Conversely, figural narration can be used for quite different purposes than can the narration of consciousness: even Henry James and Kafka often use their protagonists merely to reflect (but not to reflect *on*) the external events they witness. Other devices then come into play, such as "narrated perception," and related techniques. 3. Finally, the narrated monologue is by no means the only method used for rendering consciousness in a figural context: we have already seen that the consonant type of psycho-narration and the unsignaled quoted monologue often supplement, and sometimes supplant, the narrated monologue form.

It is only when we have drawn this distinction between narrated monologue and figural narration that we can describe the very special relationship between them. It is one not only of part to whole, but of mutual affinity and enhancement: figural narration offers the narrated monologue its optimal habitat, and the narrated monologue caps the climax of figural narration. The first is true because the narrated monologue—in contrast to the quoted monologue—suppresses all marks of quotation that set it off from the narration,

and this self-effacement can be achieved most perfectly in a milieu where the narrative presentation adheres most consistently to a figural perspective, shaping the entire fictional world as an uninterrupted *vision avec.* The narrated monologue itself, however, is not *vision avec,* but what we might call *pensée avec:* here the coincidence of perspectives is compounded by a consonance of voices, with the language of the text momentarily resonating with the language of the figural mind. In this sense one can regard the narrated monologue as the quintessence of figural narration, if not of narration itself: as the moment when the thought-thread of a character is most tightly woven into the texture of third-person narration.

Critics have called on a variety of metaphors to describe this narrator-figure coincidence: optic, acoustic, geometric, textile, erotic, and so forth. It matters little which image we use, so long as it stresses the very special two-in-one effect created by this technique, without overstressing either its dualism or its monism. To speak only of a *dual* presence (perspective, voice, etc.) seems to me misleading: for the effect of the narrated monologue is precisely to reduce to the greatest possible degree the hiatus between the narrator and the figure existing in all third-person narration.[27] But to speak simply of a *single* presence (perspective, voice, etc.) is even more misleading: for one then risks losing sight of the difference between third- and first-person narration; and before long the protagonists of figural novels (Stephen, K., Strether) become the "narrators" of their own stories.[28] In narrated monologues, as in figural narration generally, the continued employment of third-person references indicates, no matter how unobtrusively, the continued presence of a narrator. And it is his *identification*—but not his *identity*—with the character's mentality that is supremely enhanced by this technique.[29]

If the narrated monologue is defined and understood in the manner outlined in the preceding pages, then the main stages of its historical development also become clear: its occasional occurrence in eighteenth-century "Histories" (of *Tom Jones* or *Agathon*), despite their over-all authorial-ironic cast; its upsurge in the nineteenth-century Realist novel, in rough correspondence with the rise of objective over obtrusive narrators, and of the inner over the outer scene; its expansion in the twentieth-century psychological novel, prompted by the unprecedented importance given to the language of consciousness, but with the narrated monologue now competing with the rival technique of the unsignaled "Joycean" monologue. Its evolution thus differs considerably from that of the quoted monologue and of psycho-narration: since the narrated monologue blurs the line between narration and quotation so dear to the old-fashioned authorial narrator, it makes its appearance rather late in the history of narrative genres. Its growth is also closely tied to a specific moment of the novel's development: the moment when third-person fiction enters the domain previously reserved for first-person (epistolary or confessional) fiction, and begins to focus on the mental and emotional life of its characters.

It is not at all surprising, then, that Jane Austen should have been one of the first writers to use the narrated monologue frequently and extensively: for

it is in her work—as Ian Watt suggests in the epilogue to *The Rise of the Novel*—that the "divergent directions" of Richardson and Fielding were first brought together, launching the novel on its way toward their full-fledged "reconciliation" in Henry James.[30] In her narrated monologues Austen seems precisely to cast the spirit of epistolary fiction into the mold of third-person narration. This happens at moments of inner crisis in several of her novels, as in the following example from *Emma:*

> How could she have been so deceived! He protested that he had never thought seriously of Harriet—never! . . .
>
> The picture! How eager he had been about the picture! And the charade! And a hundred other circumstances; how clearly they had seemed to point at Harriet! To be sure, the charade, with its "ready wit"—but then, the "soft eyes"—in fact it suited neither; it was a jumble without taste or truth. Who could have seen through such thick-headed nonsense?[31]

And so forth, for a few more paragraphs, with the rhythm of inner debate—no matter how rhetorical and self-conscious—exactly transposed into narrative language, without explicit quotation or authorial explication. Most Victorian novelists, notably Eliot and Meredith, continued to use narrated monologues in this fashion, without altogether banishing the authorial tone from their novels as a whole.[32]

The decisive turning-point for the narrated monologue came, of course, with Flaubert. Perceptive students of his style agree that his systematic employment of the *style indirect libre* is his most influential formal achievement. Proust said, in a famous essay, that this device "completely changes the appearance of things and beings, like a newly placed lamp, or a move into a new house."[33] Flaubert himself, when he comments on his "impersonal" narrative method, employs phrases that come close to pinpointing the narrated monologue itself, especially in the following passage from a letter to George Sand: "I expressed myself badly when I told you that 'one should not write with one's heart.' I meant to say one should not put one's personality on stage. I believe that great Art is scientific and impersonal. One should, by an effort of the spirit, *transport oneself into the characters, not draw them to onself.* That, at any rate, is the method" [my emphasis].[34] Translating this kinetic image into linguistic terms would yield an exact description of the narrated monologue—as would the theological image Flaubert used elsewhere, when he referred to his "faculté panthéiste."[35]

After Flaubert, as Thibaudet remarks, the *style indirect libre* enters "into the common current of novelistic style, abounds in Daudet, Zola, Maupassant, everyone."[36] Whenever Naturalist novels focus on individual lives and on instantaneous experiences—say in Maupassant's *Une Vie,* or Zola's *Le Docteur Pascal,* or the Gervaise scenes of *L'Assommoir*—their pages teem with narrated monologues, hardly ever lapsing into directly quoted ones. Yet, in view of the Naturalists' predilection for mass scenes, wide temporal vistas, manifest behavior and dialogues, they created relatively few extended occasions for the employment of narrated monologues. Such occasions had to await the "inward turning" of the novel: those writers who believed with Henry James that "what

a man thinks and what he feels are the history and the character of what he does."[37] In James' own theoretical pronouncements, which so persistently revolve around the axis of the narrator-protagonist relationship, we find images that come even closer than Flaubert's to describing the narrated monologue. Given James' general reticence in erotic matters, it is both amusing and significant to find him using in this connection what is probably the most direct allusion to the sexual act in his entire oeuvre: "A beautiful infatuation this, always, I think, the intensity of the creative effort to get into the skin of the creature; the act of personal possession of one being by another at its completest."[38] This espousal of a character by his narrator "at its completest" is precisely what James attains in moments when he uses the narrated monologue.

The pattern set by Jane Austen thus unfolds throughout the nineteenth century: precisely those authors who, in their major works, most decisively abandoned first-person narration (Flaubert, Zola, James), instituting instead the norms of the dramatic novel, objective narration, and unobtrusive narrators, were the ones who re-introduced the subjectivity of private experience into the novel: this time not in terms of direct self-narration, but by imperceptibly integrating mental reactions into the neutral-objective report of actions, scenes, and spoken words.

When the Impressionist and Expressionist writers in Germany, and the stream-of-consciousness writers in England began to shape more slowly paced novels dominated by their characters' fluid mental responses to momentary experience, they found in the narrated monologue a ready-made technique that could easily be adapted to the new aims. Unlike the quoted monologue, it needed no Joycean revolution to make it a workable instrument for recording the minutiae of the inner life. Hence it acted as a kind of stylistic bridge that led from nineteenth- to twentieth-century fiction. Far from being a mark of modernity, the narrated monologue is a device that the novelists of our century who are most conservative in matters of form (Thomas Wolfe, Mauriac, or Lawrence) share with such experimental novelists as Virginia Woolf, Broch, Sarraute, or Robbe-Grillet. The difference lies only in the quantitative relationship of the narrated monologue to its narrative context: in *Mrs. Dalloway, The Death of Virgil, The Planetarium, The Voyeur,* the narrative text appears as the adjunct of the narrated monologue, rather than the other way around.

This brief historical synopsis of the technique must now be supplemented by closer study of its various functions and effects.

Irony and Sympathy. The narrated monologue, unlike the quoted monologue, does not readily shape itself into an independent fictional text, for by referring to the character whose thoughts it renders in the third person it includes the narrative voice in its language, and the monologic effect it creates vanishes the moment fictional facts reappear. As we have seen in the *Portrait* passage quoted earlier, when we read the sentence sequence: "But God had promised to forgive him if he was sorry. He was sorry. He clasped his hands and raised them towards the white form . . . ," the moment Stephen's manual gesture appears, the monologic impression is dispelled. The narrated monologue is thus essentially an evanescent form, dependent on the narrative voice

that mediates and surrounds it, and is therefore peculiarly dependent on tone and context.

Many novels that use the narrated monologue as the predominant technique for rendering their characters' consciousness start from a neutral and objective narrative stance—typically the description of a specific site or situation—and only gradually, often by way of minimal exposition, narrow their focus to the figural mind. The first sentence of *L'Education sentimentale* reads as follows: "On the 15th of September 1840, about six o'clock in the morning, the Ville de Montereau was ready to sail from the quai Saint-Bernard, and clouds of smoke were pouring from its funnel." From this soberly informational base, Flaubert's text then imperceptibly gravitates, within a few pages, to the emotive speculations with which Frederic reacts to Madame Arnoux's "apparition": "What was her name, her home, her life, her past? . . . He supposed her to be of Andalusian origin, perhaps a creole. Had she brought the negress back with her from the West Indies?"[39] From here on the narrator will glide in and out of Frederic's mind at will, adopting his protagonist's inner language at crucial moments, but always free to return to his objective narrative base, to describe minutely the protagonist's actions and his surroundings, or to sketch with broader strokes changes of circumstance occurring over longer periods.

But no matter how "impersonal" the tone of the text that surrounds them, narrated monologues themselves tend to commit the narrator to attitudes of sympathy or irony. Precisely because they cast the language of a subjective mind into the grammar of objective narration, they amplify emotional notes, but also throw into ironic relief all false notes struck by a figural mind. A narrator can in turn exploit both possibilities, even with the same character, and Flaubert exploits them both with Frederic, alternately stressing the pathos of his love for Madame Arnoux and the blunders of his social and professional choices. Sympathy predominates in this passage that renders Frederic's thoughts after the Arnoux bankruptcy:

> And afterwards? What would become of her? Would she be a schoolmistress, a companion, or even a lady's maid? She had been abandoned to all the perils of poverty. His ignorance of her fate tormented him. He should have prevented her flight, or else followed her. Was he not her real husband?[40]

and irony predominates in this passage where he decides on his "future":

> He wondered, seriously, if he was to be a great painter, or a great poet; and he decided in favour of painting, for the demands of this profession would bring him closer to Madame Arnoux. So he had found his vocation! The aim of his existence was now clear, and the future infallible.[41]

In the first quotation the narrator creates the impression that he is seriously identifying with Frederic's anguish; in the second he mockingly seems to identify with his inauthentic decision.

In *L'Education sentimentale* these alternating attitudes of empathy and parody are applied by the narrator to a single protagonist. But the narrated monologue also enables a narrator to weave in and out of several characters' minds. Virginia Woolf is the master-weaver of such multi-figural novels.

From Clarissa to Peter, from Rezia to Septimus, from Mrs. to Mr. Ramsay, narrated monologues pass from hers to his and back again, often without intervening narrative sentences.[42] But in transit the tone can change, and it often does when the gender of the pronoun changes. In *To the Lighthouse* a lyric climax is reached with the narration of Mrs. Ramsay's "wedge of darkness" meditation, a parodistic climax with the narration of Mr. Ramsay's "He reached Q" rumination.[43] The fertile feminine mind and the arid masculine mind are both relayed by the same narrator's grammar, but the former's language is heightened by the transposition, the latter's is abated.

The ironic pole of this tonal range is most clearly in evidence when narrated monologues show up in a pronouncedly authorial milieu, framed by explicit commentary. Here is how the Stendhal narrator presents Fabrice's reactions to the filching of his horse by his own comrades at the Battle of Waterloo:

> He could find no consolation for so great an infamy, and, leaning his back against a willow, began to shed hot tears. He abandoned one by one all those beautiful dreams of a chivalrous and sublime friendship, like that of the heroes of the *Gerusalemme Liberata.* To see death come to one was nothing, surrounded by heroic and tender hearts, by noble friends who clasp one by the hand as one yields one's dying breath! But to retain one's enthusiasm surrounded by a pack of vile scoundrels!!! Like all angry men Fabrizio exaggerated. After a quarter of an hour of this melting mood. . . .[44]

A character's illusions and a narrator's worldliness, romance and realism clash head-on here, with the triple exclamation mark signaling the "exaggeration" of Fabrice's language even before it is spelled out after the fact. Framed in this fashion by markedly dissonant psycho-narration, a narrated monologue appears as though it were enclosed in tacit quotation marks, creating an effect of mock-impersonation. The metaphor of an actor playing a role, which a number of critics have applied to the narrator-character relationship created by the narrated monologue,[45] is valid here only if we expand it to include the actor schooled in Brechtean alienating techniques.

Even abrupter alienation is achieved when authorial remarks are enclosed *within* a narrated monologue. An interesting instance of this kind occurs in *The Magic Mountain,* when the amorous Hans Castorp catches himself singing a love ditty from the lowlands, turns a critical glance on its banal language, and in turn prompts his narrator to turn a critical glance on his hero's language:

> This kind of sentimental ditty might very well satisfy and please some young man who had quite legitimately, peacefully, and optimistically "given his heart," as the saying goes, to some healthy little goose down there in the flatlands. . . . But for him and his relationship with Madame Chauchat—the word "relationship" must be charged to his account, we refuse to take the responsibility for it—this kind of ditty was decidedly inappropriate.[46]

Note that the narrator, even as he dissociates himself from his character, draws attention to the fact that it is not he, but his character, who here engenders

the vocabulary of the narrative text. He is actually teaching his reader an instant lesson in narrative technique, as much as to say: don't be deceived by appearances, this passage may look like my narration, but it is really a monologue that I am narrating—verbatim.[47]

Such explicitly ironic narrators play easier games with the narrated monologue than those who pretend sympathy for their characters in the surrounding text, creating what might be called mock-figural narrative situations. In Sartre's *Bildungsnovella* of a budding fascist, "L'Enfance d'un chef," the narrator adopts, from beginning to end, the point of view of Lucien, his *salot*-protagonist. Inauthenticity stands most clearly revealed not in the purely narrative sections of the work, but at those moments when Lucien's own language appears in the guise of narration. The following narrated monologue toward the end of the story tells how he discovers in anti-Semitism a long-searched-for identity and virility:

> He absolutely had to find words to express this extraordinary discovery. Quietly, cautiously, he raised his hand to his forehead, like a lighted candle, then collected himself, for an instant, thoughtful and sacred, and the words came of themselves, he murmured: "I HAVE RIGHTS!" Rights! Something in the nature of triangles and circles: it was so perfect that it didn't exist, no matter how many thousands of rings you traced with a compass, you could never make a single circle. In the same way generations of workers could scrupulously obey the commands of Lucien, they would never exhaust his right to command, rights were beyond existence, like mathematical objects or religious dogmas. And Lucien was precisely that: an enormous bouquet of responsibilities and rights.[48]

This language creates its own distancing effects from within; exaggerations, pompously narcissistic imagery, the false analogy between mathematical, religious, and social absolutes: all build up the devastating portrait of an inauthentic man.

The first half of the "Nausicaa" section of *Ulysses* uses narrated monologues in a similar context, melted into mock-figural narration.[49] The narrator's style is at times so strongly "infected" by Gerty's own mental idiom that it is difficult to draw borderlines between narration and narrated monologue—even more difficult than in the *Ulysses* sections that quote Bloom's or Stephen's thoughts directly, since no help is offered by changing person or tense. Yet a narrator is distinctly present, and it is his burlesque of sentimental *kitsch* that molds the common denominator between his narration and Gerty's thoughts:

> She gazed out towards the distant sea. . . . And while she gazed her heart went pitapat. Yes, it was her he was looking at and there was meaning in his look. His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul. Wonderful eyes they were, superbly expressive, but could you trust them? People were so queer.[50]

From "Yes" on, the sentences lend themselves to translation into quoted monologue. But the preceding sentences—"pitapat" and all—are purely narrative even as they speak of Gerty as she would speak of herself.

The satirical force of both Joyce's and Sartre's narrative style in these texts relies in part on the shock effect created by the parody of a norm: the normal milieu for narrated monologue is *serious* figural narration. The empathic pole of this technique's tonal scale can be observed in all the more celebrated novels of this type: James' *Ambassadors,* Joyce's *Portrait,* Lawrence's *Plumed Serpent,* the three Kafka novels, Robbe-Grillet's *Voyeur.* Their protagonists—no matter how distorted or benighted they may be—are presented to the reader's understanding "from within," through a profusion of narrated monologues.

One of the most poignant instances is a frequently quoted passage from the penultimate paragraph of *The Trial.* It renders Josef K.'s thoughts instants before he is slaughtered by his two executioners:

> His glance fell on the top story of the house adjoining the quarry. With a flicker as of a light going up, the casements of a window there suddenly flew open, a human figure, faint and insubstantial at that distance and that height, leaned abruptly far forward and stretched both arms still farther. Who was it? A friend? A good man? Someone who sympathized? Someone who wanted to help? Was it one person only? Or was it mankind? Was help at hand? Were there arguments in his favor that one had overlooked? Of course there must be. Logic is doubtless unshakable, but it cannot withstand a man who wants to go on living. Where was the Judge whom he had never seen? Where was the High Court, to which he had never penetrated? He raised his hands and spread out all his fingers.[51]

This is the moment of his novel where Kafka perhaps comes closest to "giving away" the existential implications of *The Trial,* or at least the fact that the work *has* existential implications. And it is not coincidental that this moment takes the form of a narrated monologue: had it been quoted directly, signaled as K.'s mental language, fenced off from the surrounding narration, it could not have implicated the narrator (and the reader) in K.'s anguish to nearly the same degree. The cumulative interrogations—a syntactic pattern typical of Kafka's narrated monologues—bring to a climax *in extremis* all the unknowns that have been gathering throughout the novel. Prompted by the vision of the lone figure in the window—perhaps a projection of the self—this crescendo of narrated questions leads from the specific and concrete "Who was it?" to the general and abstract "was help at hand . . . ? Where was the Judge . . . ? the High Court . . . ?" The impersonal forms (one, a man) further underline the "everyman" status K. acquires here. And the gnomic present tense in the sentence "Logic is doubtless unshakable . . ."—a rare occurrence in Kafka's third-person works—further suggests that this penultimate moment of the novel builds a deliberate stylistic (as well as thematic) climax. By contrast, the direct quotation of K.'s dying words—"'Like a dog!', he said"—abruptly cuts the empathic communication.

Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil*—a novel he himself called a stretched-out lyric poem—shows what happens when this kind of stylistic pitch is extended over hundreds of pages. The formal experiment is entirely in keeping with the daring subject: a verbal artist's lone mental crisis during the last eigh-

teen hours of his life. Adhering closely to Virgil's feverish mind, the text's more than five hundred pages minutely render the continuous flow of his hyper-consciousness until it comes to a halt with words that signal and signify passage into death: "it was the word beyond speech." The work's time structure thus approaches that of autonomous monologues like "Penelope," in which a character's mental language simultaneously determines the forward movement of fictional time and text, without elision or summary.

Broch's own description of his work indicates his precise awareness of the technique he used to render this continuous mental experience: "Even though it is presented in the third person, it is the interior monologue of a poet."[52] Yet, technically, this description is something of an overstatement: even this work, taken *as a whole,* cannot be regarded as an uninterrupted narrated monologue. For one thing, it begins with an omniscient prelude that, after describing Augustus' fleet approaching the harbor of Brundisium, introduces the protagonist with solemn formality: "on the ship that immediately followed was the poet of the Aeneid and death's signet was engraved upon his brow."[53] But even after the marathon of narrated monologues begins in the following paragraph, the narrative voice occasionally reappears to report internal and external changes, inner visions and outer sights, and especially Virgil's own physical gestures. If the novel nonetheless creates the impression of absolute homogeneity, of a poetic monologue from beginning to end, it is because the narrative voice is tuned to exactly the same pitch as the figural voice; or, phrased in terms of the acting metaphor applied earlier, the narrated monologue here casts the narrator in a role that coincides with his own "real" self. It becomes the choice medium for the mental portraiture *of* a verbal artist *by* a verbal artist, both joined in a language flow of sustained poetic prose.

Because the method works cumulatively, by huge "serpent-sentences" and tightly woven imagistic-ideational complexes, quotation can only faintly suggest the effect. Here is a minimal illustration (from the opening section; Virgil is observing the gluttony of the courtiers on board ship):

> Everywhere there was someone putting something into his mouth, everywhere smouldering avarice and lust, rootless but ready to devour, all-devouring, their fumes wavered over the deck, carried along on the beat of the oars, inescapable, unavoidable; the whole ship was lapped in a wave of greed. *Oh, they deserved to be shown up once for what they were! A song of avarice should be dedicated to them! But what would that accomplish? Nothing avails the poet, he can right no wrongs; he is heeded only if he extols the world, never if he portrays it as it is. Only falsehood wins renown, not understanding! And could one assume that the Aeneid would be vouchsafed another or better influence?* [my emphasis][54]

The passage contains two typical devices for melding the narrating and the figural voices. First, by rendering what Virgil sees in Virgil's own emotive-lyrical idiom, scenic description (the first sentence) flows uninterruptedly into the narrated exclamations that follow. But whereas a conjunction of poetic description and monologue is not itself unusual in novels that adopt the *vision avec,* it is rarely so effective and convincing: here the perceiving mind belongs

to a creative poet, who would naturally (professionally) transmute the reality he perceives into poetic language—at the very moment when he perceives it.

The second device is more special to Broch, and he uses it perennially: when Virgil formulates generalizations in his mind, the tense of the narrated monologue shifts from past to present: "Nothing avails the poet, he can right no wrong; he is heeded only if he extols the world, never if he portrays it as it is. Only falsehood wins renown, not understanding." Note that these statements sound identical to a narrator's *ex cathedra* statements in gnomic present tense. But since they continue (and are continued by) the statements of the narrated thought-sequence, they must be interpreted as quotations of Virgil's monologic language. Clearly Broch has created this equivocation of vocal origins systematically, in order to fuse narrator and character inextricably in the language of philosophic commentary.[55] This gnomic language later reaches climactic density and intensity in long passages of versified poetry that grow out of and merge back into Virgil's narrated monologues.[56]

In Broch's *Death of Virgil,* then, the narrated monologue reaches both quantitatively and qualitatively an extreme limit. The near-continuous employment of the technique in its most empathic form, inducing a radical fusion of narrating and figural voices, leads third-person narration to the frontiers where it borders at once on lyric poetry and philosophic discourse.

Notes

1. "Er hatte seit kurzem—er wusste nicht wodurch—all seine Munterkeit eingebüsst, seine gewohnten Übungen aufgegeben, und es stand in der Tat so übel um seine Gemütslage, dass die Erde, dieser treffliche Bau, ihm nur ein kahles Vorgebirge schien. Dieser herrliche Baldachin, die Luft, dieses majestätische Dach mit goldnem Feuer ausgelegt: kam es ihm doch nicht anders vor als ein fauler, verpesteter Haufe von Dünsten. Welch ein Meisterwerk war der Mensch! Wie edel durch Vernunft! Wie unbegrenzt an Fähigkeiten! In Gestalt und Bewegung wie bedeutend und wunderwürdig im Handeln, wie ähnlich einem Engel; im Begreifen, wie ähnlich einem Gotte; die Zierde der Welt! Das Vorbild der Lebendigen! Und doch: was war ihm diese Quintessenz vom Staube? Er hatte keine Lust am Manne—und am Weibe auch nicht." Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf, *Papa Hamlet* (Stuttgart, 1968), p. 28. Ruby Cohn has drawn attention to this transposition of Hamlet's speech into narrated monologue form in *Modern Shakespeare Offshoots* (Princeton, N.J., 1976), p. 153.

2. This Hamlet speech is not, of course, strictly speaking, a monologue, since he speaks it in the presence of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But for my present purposes this fact is not relevant.

3. Cf. Roland Barthes's suggestion that certain passages in third-person texts can be "rewritten" (he uses the Frenchified verb "rewriter") in the first person ("Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits," *Communications* 8 [1966], 1–27, p. 20). See also Richard Ohmann's application of the "transformation" concept to a Hemingway text containing narrated monologue ("Generative Grammars and the Concept of Literary Style," *Word* 20 [1964], 423–439).

4. *Mrs. Dalloway* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World [Harvest Books], n.d.), pp. 101–102.

5. "Da blieb Barnabas stehen. *Wo waren sie? Ging es nicht mehr weiter? Würde Barnabas K. verabschieden? Es würde ihm nicht gelingen.* K. hielt Barnabas' Arm fest, dass

es fast ihn selbst schmerzte. *Oder sollte das Unglaubliche geschehen sein, und sie waren schon im Schloss oder vor seinen Toren? Aber sie waren ja, soweit K. wusste, gar nicht gestiegen. Oder hatte ihn Barnabas einen so unmerklich ansteigenden Weg geführt?* "Wo sind wir?" fragte K. leise, mehr sich als ihn" [my emphasis]. *Das Schloss* (New York: Schocken Books, 1946/1962), pp. 45–46; English based on *The Castle,* trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Modern Library, 1969), p. 39.

6. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Viking Press [Compass Books], 1964), p. 143.

7. This "as if" quality of narrated monologue has been described by Harald Weinrich (*Tempus* [Stuttgart, 1964], p. 235). Paul Hernadi similarly designates the mental life rendered through this technique as "quasi-verbal" ("Dual Perspective: Free Indirect Discourse and Related Techniques," *Comparative Literature* 24 [1972], p. 39).

8. For a comprehensive study of all the different "signals" that characterize narrated monologue, see R. J. Lethcoe, "Narrated Speech and Consciousness," Ph.D. Diss. Wisconsin, 1969, pp. 79–169. Ludomír Doležel's survey of "Discriminative Features in Czech Represented Discourse" (*Narrative Modes in Czech Literature* [Toronto, 1973], pp. 20–40) is equally useful.

9. See Eugen Lerch, *Hauptprobleme der französischen Sprache* (Braunschweig, 1930), pp. 132–133. That the *Bovary* trial did in part deal with passages of narrated monologue—misread by the prosecution as authorial statements—has recently been demonstrated by Hans Robert Jauss in *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt a. M., 1970), pp. 203–206.

10. Oskar Walzel, "Von 'erlebter' Rede" in *Das Wortkunstwerk* (1926, rpt. Heidelberg, 1968), p. 228. This essay was published before Joyce was known in Germany.

11. Several of the early articles on *erlebte Rede* appeared in the *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift* before World War I, notably those of Charles Bally and Eugen Lerch. During the nineteen-twenties the following books discussed the subject at length: Etienne Lorck, *Die "erlebte Rede": eine sprachliche Untersuchung* (Heidelberg, 1921); Marguerite Lips, *Le Style indirect libre* (Paris, 1926); Werner Günther, *Probleme der Rededarstellung* (Marburg, 1928). A detailed presentation of the research before 1930 is given in Lethcoe's dissertation, pp. 12–53.

12. Leo Spitzer, *Stilstudien* II (1922, rpt. Munich, 1961), pp. 166–207, and "Zur Entstehung der sogenannten 'erlebten Rede,'" *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift* 16 (1928), 327ff.; Walzel, "Von 'erlebter' Rede"; Albert Thibaudet, *Gustave Flaubert* (Paris, 1935), pp. 246–254.

13. The first German edition of Stanzel's *Narrative Situations in the Novel,* where *erlebte Rede* is discussed as a characteristic feature of the "figural" novel type, appeared in 1955. The first edition of Hamburger's *Logik der Dichtung,* where the technique is viewed as the quintessence of narrative language, appeared in 1957. See also Stanzel's article "Episches Praeteritum, erlebte Rede, historisches Praesens," *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift* 33 (1959), 1–12, and Norbert Miller, "Erlebte und verschleierte Rede," *Akzente* 5 (1958), 213–226.

14. Genette, whose "Discours du récit" is centered on *A la Recherche,* devotes only one paragraph to *style indirect libre,* which he classifies as a "variant" of indirect discourse, and illustrates with a rather lame example from Proust (*Figures III,* Paris, 1972, p. 192). Todorov leaves it out of consideration in *Littérature et signification,* but discusses it briefly in "Les régistres de la parole," *Journal de Psychologie* (1967), pp. 265–278, esp. pp. 271–272. In view of the importance both these critics give to the relationship between narration and discourse, it is surprising that they have never studied the technique where the borderline between these two language fields becomes effaced.

15. The two books on the stream-of-consciousness novel by Humphrey and Fried-

man are exceptions of sorts. Humphrey, without referring to the French or German terms, identifies an "indirect interior monologue" which he illustrates with examples from *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway* (*Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* [Berkeley, 1954], pp. 28–33). His examples make it evident that "indirect interior monologue," far from being a technique special to the stream-of-consciousness novel, however, is in reality identical to the *style indirect libre–erlebte Rede* found in most standard nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction. Melvin Friedman does make the connection between Humphrey's term and the standard French term. But he confuses the issue by maintaining that *style indirect libre* is an "imperfect" forerunner of "indirect interior monologue" (*Stream of Consciousness: A Study in Literary Method* [New Haven, 1955], p. 21; see also pp. 4, 63, 198, 233). I explain below (n. 24) why I consider Humphrey's term misleading.

16. For Daiches and Watt, see below. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg fail to include this technique in their otherwise cogent discussion of methods for rendering consciousness in ch. 5 of *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966). Booth's dismissal of *erlebte Rede* is in line with his cavalier treatment of grammatical distinctions in fiction generally; see esp. "Distance and Point of View: An Esssay in Classification," *Essays in Criticism* 11 (1961), 60–79, p. 60.

17. *The Passages of Thought: Psychological Representation in the American Novel 1870–1900* (New York, 1969), pp. 64, 70. See also Ian Watt, "The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors:* An Explication," *Essays in Criticism* 10 (1960), 250–274. Watt evidently has narrated monologue passages in mind when he says: "because the narrator's consciousness and Strether's are both present, we often don't know whose mental operations and evaluative judgments are involved in particular cases" (p. 261). When Watt describes the transition from the third to the fourth sentence of *The Ambassadors* as a rapid passing "from the objective analysis . . . to what must be a verbatim quotation from Strether's mind" (pp. 261–262), he is actually referring to a quite standard passage from psycho-narration to narrated monologue.

18. William M. Schutte, *Introduction to Twentieth Century Interpretations of* A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968), p. 12.

19. *Virginia Woolf* (New York, 1963), p. 72. Another critic even criticizes Woolf for her "obtrusive art," because she "adroitly and purposely" conceals the "clear and inviolable line of demarcation" that supposedly separates inner and outer reality in fiction (Stuart Rosenberg, "The Match in the Crocus: Obtrusive Art in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway,*" *Modern Fiction Studies* 13 [1967], 211–220, p. 217).

20. See, for example, William O. Hendricks, who singles out free indirect style as one of the key problems extending linguistics "beyond the sentence in the sense of proceeding from function to form" ("On the Notion 'Beyond the Sentence,'" *Linguistics* 37 [1967], 12–51, pp. 38–40).

In England, free indirect style was a focus of attention for a group of stylistic linguists at the University of Leeds, working under the Romance philologist Stephen Ullmann. Ullmann's own chapter, "Reported Speech and internal monologue in Flaubert," in *Style in the French Novel* (Oxford, 1964) is still one of the best studies of the subject in English. For a recent approach by an American linguist, see Ann Banfield, "Narrative Style and the Grammar of Direct and Indirect Speech," *Foundations of Language* 10 (1973), 1–39.

21. See especially Paul Hernadi, "Dual Perspective: Free Indirect Discourse and Related Techniques," and R. J. Lethcoe's previously mentioned dissertation. See also my "Narrated Monologue: Definition of a Fictional Style" (*Comparative Literature* 18 [1966], 97–112), which represents an early version of the present chapter, and where I first introduced the term "narrated monologue." The new book by the British Ger-

manist Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and its Functions in the Nineteenth-Century European Novel* (Manchester, 1977), reached me only after completion of my manuscript.

22. See, for example, Spitzer and Lips. This spoken aspect has received some attention in English as well: see esp. Michael Gregory, "Old Bailey-Speech in *A Tale of Two Cities,*" *Review of English Literature* 6, no. 2 (1965), 42–55; and Norman Page, *Speech in the English Novel* (London, 1973), pp. 34–38.

23. For a discussion of terms used in English, see Lethcoe, pp. 4–5. Lethcoe's own approach through descriptive linguistics prompts his preference for the umbrella-term "narrated speech," which he in turn divides into "narrated inner speech" (my "narrated monologue") and "narrated outer speech." This minor terminological difference reflects the different emphasis of Lethcoe's study from my own.

24. Although Humphrey's term "indirect interior monologue" is as limited as mine, its first modifier is based on a misleading analogy with indirect discourse—assuming as it does that this technique for rendering consciousness is "indirect" in the same sense as quoted interior monologue is "direct." Both Humphrey's term and the false analogy stem from Dujardin (*Le Monologue intérieur* [Paris, 1931], pp. 39–40).

25. "Les Régistres de la parole," pp. 271–272.

26. Cf. Hernadi's much broader term "substitutionary narration," which corresponds to *vision avec* (or the figural narrative situation) rather than to what I call narrated monologue. Hernadi's sub-category of "substitutionary thought," however, corresponds exactly to narrated monologue ("Dual Perspective," pp. 35 and 38).

27. Phrases like "duplicity," "double perspective," "twofold vision," "dual voice" crop up constantly in analyses of novels using the narrated monologue. Ian Watt, for example, speaks of "the split narrative point of view" and the "dual presence of Strether's consciousness and of that of the narrator" in *The Ambassadors,* when he is actually trying to define their singular fusion in the Jamesian text. ("The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors,*" pp. 260, 266.)

28. This persistently happens in Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961, e.g., pp. 164, 279, 282, 300). The same confusion pervades George H. Szanto's book *Narrative Consciousness* (Austin, Tex., 1972).

29. In her linguistic discussion, Ann Banfield cuts through the problem of the narrator-character relationship in narrated monologue texts by suggesting that it makes no sense to talk of a narrator in such texts at all ("Narrative Style," pp. 34–38). I do not find her argument convincing. As she herself admits, narrated monologues are sometimes found in the same texts with audible narrators, and vice versa. In the narratorless model she proposes for the narrated monologue there would be no way of accounting for the continuity of the voice that refers to the protagonist in the same third-person form in passages of authorial commentary and of narrated monologue. The model of a narrator who identifies or coheres with the figural consciousness still seems the most satisfying one to account for the narrated monologue.

30. *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley, 1967), pp. 296–297.

31. *Emma,* ch. 16.

32. Cf. Willi Bühler, *Die 'erlebte Rede' im englischen Roman. Ihre Vorstufen und ihre Ausbildung im Werke Jane Austens* (Leipzig, 1937), and Lisa Glauser, *Die erlebte Rede im Roman des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bern, 1948).

33. "A propos du 'Style' de Flaubert," *Nouvelle Revue Française* 14 (1920), 72–90, p. 78; reprinted in *Chroniques* (Paris, 1927). See also Thibaudet's reply in the same volume of *Nouvelle Revue Française,* 426–441, and his chapter on style in *Gustave Flaubert* (Paris, 1935), esp. pp. 246–250. See further Stephen Ullmann, "Reported Speech and Internal Monologue in Flaubert," in *Style in the French Novel* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 94–

120, and Victor Brombert, *The Novels of Flaubert* (Princeton, N.J., 1966), pp. 76–78 and 167–173.

34. Letter to George Sand, 15–16 Dec., 1866 (*Correspondence* V [Paris, 1929], p. 257).

35. Quoted in Ullmann, *Style in the French Novel,* p. 119.

36. *Gustave Flaubert,* p. 248.

37. *The Art of the Novel,* ed. Richard P. Blackmur (New York, 1962), p. 66.

38. Op. cit., p. 37.

39. "Le 15 septembre 1840, vers six heures du matin, *la Ville de Montereau,* près de partir, fumait à gros tourbillons devant le quai Saint-Bernard. . . . Quels étaient son nom, sa demeure, sa vie, son passé? . . . Il la supposait d'origine andalouse, créole peut-être; elle avait ramené des îles cette négresse avec elle?" *L'Education sentimentale, Oeuvres* II (Paris: Gallimard [Bibliothèque de la Pléiade], 1951), p. 37; English: *Sentimental Education,* trans. Anthony Goldsmith (New York: Everyman's Library, 1941 [1966]), p. 6.

40. "Et après? que deviendrait-elle? Institutrice, dame de compagnie, femme de chambre, peut-être? Elle était livrée à tous les hasards de la misère. Cette ignorance de son sort le torturait. Il aurait dû s'opposer à sa fuite ou partir derrière elle. N'était-il pas son véritable époux?" Op cit., p. 438; trans., p. 378.

41. "Il se demanda, sérieusement, s'il serait un grand peintre ou un grand poète;—et il se décida pour la peinture, car les exigences de ce métier le rapprocheraient de Mme Arnoux. Il avait donc trouvé sa vocation! Le but de son existence était clair maintenant, et l'avenir infaillible." Op cit., p. 82; trans., p. 48.

42. See, for example, *Mrs. Dalloway,* pp. 70–71, 101; *To the Lighthouse* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World [Harvest Book], n.d.), pp. 100, 226.

43. *To the Lighthouse,* pp. 95–100, 53–57.

44. "Il ne pouvait se consoler de tant d'infamie, et, le dos appuyé contre un saule, il se mit à pleurer à chaudes larmes. Il défaisait un à un ses beaux rêves d'amitié chevaleresque et sublime, comme celle des heros de la *Jérusalem délivrée.* Voir arriver la mort n'était rien, entouré d'âmes héroiques et tendres, de nobles amis qui vous serrent la main au moment du dernier soupir! mais garder son enthousiasme, entouré de vils fripons!!! Fabrice exagérait comme tout homme indigné. Au bout d'un quart d'heure d'attendrissement . . ." *La Chartreuse de Parme* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin [Bibliothèque de Cluny], 1957), I, p. 55 (ch. 3); English: *The Charterhouse of Parma,* trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Modern Library, 1937), p. 61.

45. See, e.g., Hugo Friedrich, *Drei Klassiker des französischen Romans* (Frankfurt a. M., 1966), p. 128: "The narrator does not stand next to his figures, but he slips inside them. . . . He becomes the actor who plays the role of his figures."

46. "An solchem innigen Liedchen mochte irgendein junger Mann Genüge und Gefallen finden, der "sein Herz," wie man zu sagen pflegt, erlaubter-, friedlicher- und aussichtsreicherweise irgend einem gesunden Gänschen dort unten im Flachlande "geschenkt" hatte. . . . Für ihn und sein Verhältnis zu Madame Chauchat—das Wort "Verhältnis" kommt auf seine Rechnung, wir lehnen die Verantwortung dafür ab—schickte sich ein solches Gedichtchen entschieden nicht." *Der Zauberberg, Gesammelte Werke* vol. III (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1960), p. 198.

47. In "Erlebte und verschleierte Rede," Norbert Miller points out that this tongue-in-cheek variety has a much longer history than the serious narrated monologue form—a change that corresponds to the general evolution of the novel from the authorial to the figural pole. Modern ironists like Mann and Musil, however, revert to the older form with particular gusto. See Werner Hoffmeister, *Studien zur erlebten Rede bei Thomas Mann und Robert Musil* (The Hague, 1965), pp. 110–127.

48. "Il fallait absolument trouver des mots pour exprimer son extraordinaire dé-

couverte. Il éleva doucement, précautionneusement sa main jusqu'à son front, comme un cierge allumé, puis il se recueillit un instant, pensif et sacré, et les mots vinrent d'eux-mêmes, il murmura: "J'AI DES DROITS!" Des Droits! Quelque chose dans le genre des triangles et des cercles: c'était si parfait que ça n'existait pas, on avait beau tracer des milliers de ronds avec des compas, on n'arrivait pas à réaliser un seul cercle. Des générations d'ouvriers pourraient, de même, obéir scrupuleusement aux ordres de Lucien, ils n'épuiseraient jamais son droit à commander, les droits c'était par delà l'existence, comme les objets mathématiques et les dogmes religieux. Et voilà que Lucien, justement, c'était ça: un énorme bouquet de responsabilités et de droits." "L'Enfance d'un chef," in *Le Mur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), p. 220.

49. Robert Humphrey seems to be the only critic to have identified correctly the basic technique of the Gerty-half of "Nausicaa" (*Stream of Consciousness,* pp. 30–31).

50. *Ulysses* (New York: Modern Library [Random House], 1961), p. 357.

51. "Seine Blicke fielen auf das letzte Stockwerk des an den Steinbruch angrenzenden Hauses. Wie ein Licht aufzuckt, so fuhren die Fensterflügel eines Fensters dort auseinander, ein Mensch, schwach und dünn in der Ferne und Höhe, beugte sich mit einem Ruck weit vor und streckte die Arme noch weiter aus. Wer war es? Ein Freund? Ein guter Mensch? Einer, der teilnahm? Einer, der helfen wollte? War es ein einzelner? Waren es alle? War noch Hilfe? Gab es Einwände, die man vergessen hatte? Gewiss gab es solche. Die Logik ist zwar unerschütterlich, aber einem Menschen, der leben will, widersteht sie nicht. Wo war der Richter, den er nie gesehen hatte? Wo war das hohe Gericht, bis zu dem er nie gekommen war? Er hob die Hände und spreizte alle Finger." *Der Prozess,* pp. 271–272; English based on *The Trial,* trans. Muir/Butler, pp. 254–255.

52. "Bemerkungen zum *Tod des Vergil,*" *Essays* I (Zurich, 1955), p. 265.

53. *Der Tod des Vergil* (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1952), p. 9; English: *The Death of Virgil,* trans. Jean Starr Untermeyer (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965), pp. 11–12.

54. "Überall gab es einen, der etwas in den Mund steckte, überall schwelte Begehrlichkeit, schwelte Habsucht, wurzellos, schlingbereit, allesverschlingend, ihr Brodem flackerte über das Deck hin, wurde im Rucktakte der Ruder mitbefördert, unentrinnbar, unabstellbar: das ganze Schiff war von Gier umflackert. Oh, sie verdienten es, einmal richtig dargestellt zu werden! Ein Gesang der Gier müsste ihnen gewidmet werden! Doch was sollte dies schon nützen?! nichts vermag der Dichter, keinem Übel vermag er abzuhelfen; er wird nur dann gehört, wenn er die Welt verherrlicht, nicht jedoch, wenn er sie darstellt, wie sie ist. Bloss die Lüge ist Ruhm, nicht die Erkenntnis! Und wäre es da denkbar, dass der Aneis eine andere, eine bessere Wirkung vergönnt sein sollte?" *Der Tod des Vergil,* pp. 13–14; *The Death of Virgil,* p. 15. (I have altered the tense of two verb-forms to make the translation correspond to the original; see n. 55 below.)

55. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, the passages that employ the present tense in the original were translated into the English past tense. This change, as the "Translator's Note" explains, was deliberate (*The Death of Virgil,* p. 488). Though it was made on rather doubtful linguistic grounds, the fact that it was made with Broch's approval is definite proof that he envisioned the present-tense passages as monologic, rather than authorial, language. But the ambiguity created by the present tense in the original gets lost in the English—though it is, in all other respects, a masterful translation.

56. The "Hymns against Beauty" and the "Elegies on Fate" (*The Death of Virgil,* pp. 97ff. and 200ff.).

22

Ann Banfield

From Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction

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The evidence for the theory of reported speech elaborated in Chapter 1 is drawn from the spoken language. In certain literary texts, however, the distinctions between direct and indirect speech seem blurred or violated.[1] A relevant example is the passage below from D. H. Lawrence:

> Was there blood on his face? Was hot blood flowing? Or was it dry blood congealing down his cheek? It took him hours even to ask the question: time being no more than an agony in darkness, without measurement.
>
> A long time after he opened his eyes he realized he was seeing something—something, something, but the effort to recall was too great. No, no; no recall! (Lawrence, "England, My England," p. 332)

This passage is characterized by marks of direct speech—inverted questions, repetitions, exclamations, incomplete sentences. But it is not read as direct speech—and not only because the quotation marks are missing. Exclamations like "No, no" are not ascribed to an invisible first person reacting to the scene he describes, but are attributed to the person referred to by the pronoun *he.* These exclamations cannot be indirectly quoted, and none of the sentences above is embedded in an introductory clause. There is, in fact, one explicit confirmation of this reading. The sentence "It took him hours even to ask the question" makes it clear that the three preceding inverted questions are posed by the *he* and not by an invisible first person. Furthermore, the past tense in them does not receive its normal past reading—the blood *was* on his face simultaneous with his reaction to it.

The departures from both direct and indirect speech are even more evident in the opening passage of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (p. 5):

> [1]Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.
>
> [2]For Lucy had her work cut out for her. [3]The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. [4]And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning—fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

> [5]What a lark! What a plunge! [6]For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. [7]How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, "Musing among the vegetables?"—was that it?—"I prefer men to cauliflowers"—was that it? [8]He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out on the terrace—Peter Walsh. [9]He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull; it was his sayings one remembered, his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished—how strange it was!—a few sayings like this about cabbages.

The first sentence appears to contain indirect speech, though the subordinator *that* is suppressed. But no other sentence in the passage is embedded after an introductory clause. Nevertheless, the shifted past form *would,* characteristic of indirect speech, occurs in the independent sentences 3 and 9. In neither case can *would* be construed as a conditional or habitual, as is the usual case for *would* in independent clauses.

Furthermore, the sentiments in the passage must be attributed to Mrs. Dalloway and not to a narrator. The parenthetical "thought Clarissa Dalloway" which interrupts sentence 4, as well as the phrases "so it had always seemed to her" in 6 and "she forgot which" in 9, allow no other interpretation. Except for the verb tenses and the third person pronouns for the source of the expressive point of view, the passage could be direct speech. Sentence 2, like 6, begins with a conjunction which could not appear at the head of an embedded clause:[2]

> *Clarissa said that for Lucy had her work cut out for her.[3]

Sentences 5 and 9 contain exclamations. 7 is an exclamatory sentence and 9 contains one in parenthetical position. Several sentences have undergone root transformations—the adverb *so* in 6 has been preposed, for instance. Adverbs cannot occur in that position in embedded Ss:[4]

> a. Clarissa admitted that it had always seemed so to her.
> b. *Clarissa admitted that so it had always seemed to her.

The noun phrase *Peter Walsh* has been dislocated in 8. The same inverted question occurs twice in 7. Finally, though neither the first person pronoun nor the present tense is used, deictic demonstratives normally cotemporal with the present tense appear with the shifted past. In indirect speech "this" in 7 and "these days" in 9 would appear as "that" and "those days."

Similar passages abound in French narrative texts. In the one from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* below, we find the same apparent violations of the

boundaries between direct and indirect speech as in the passage from *Mrs. Dalloway:*

> Elle se promena dans son jardinet, passant et revenant par les mêmes allées, s'arrêtant devant les plates-bandes, devant l'espalier, devant le curé de plâtre, considérant avec ébahissement toutes ces choses d'autrefois qu'elle connaissait si bien. Comme le bal déjà lui semblait loin! Qui donc écartait, à tant de distance, le matin d'avant-hier et le soir d'aujourdhui? (Flaubert, *Madame Bovary,* p. 376).
>
> [She walked in the garden, pacing up and down the same paths, stopping before the flowerbeds, before the fruit tree wall, before the plaster *curé,* considering with astonishment all these things from her past that she knew so well. How far away the ball already seemed to her! Who then set the morning of the day before at such a distance from this very evening?]

Again, we find exclamations, exclamatory sentences and inverted questions interpreted as the point of view of a third person, in this case, Emma Bovary, the *elle* of the passage. Again the present moment for calculating the time value of deictics like *avant-hier* and *aujourd'hui* is understood as simultaneous with a past tense verb; this verb in French is, moreover, in a particular past tense, the *imparfait.*

The phenomenon presented in these passages is the exclusively literary style known as *le style indirect libre* in French and *erlebte Rede* in German and which I call "represented speech and thought." It has only in the last few years been recognized as a specifically grammatical phenomenon in Anglo-American criticism. (This is why it has no well-established English name.) But the lack of explicit commentary on its grammatical features does not mean that the style has been entirely ignored as a literary phenomenon. Indeed, under terms like "third person point of view," it has long been a central focus of every modern theory of the novel. It is narrative fiction, according to modern criticism, which has thrust what is called "the problem of point of view" into the modern consciousness.

In its origins, point of view is a notion borrowed from the visual arts, with their preoccupation with vision and perspective. Point of view is a "viewing position" (Uspensky, 1973, p. 2), an "angle of vision" or a "camera angle" (Kuno and Kaburaki, 1977). Any subject confronting the world necessarily adopts a position from which he perceives what will constitute his visual field, his experience, and any point of view is thus a limited one. But, in this approach, there is no escaping point of view.

This natural metaphor for subjectivity is then extended to language and the language arts. In itself, point of view in language in the sense of a spatial position is not a grammatical notion, but a pragmatic one.[5] In language, it has been axiomatically taken as located in a speaker. As long as speech is the model for language and, by extension, for literature, using language remains synonymous with telling someone something. Such a model, then, adopts communication as the paradigm of linguistic performance. Recent French narrative the-

ory has made what is often only assumed explicit. Thus, Roland Barthes (1966, p. 18) writes:

> in the story, as an object, a communication is at stake: there is a sender of the story. It is well known that in linguistic communication *I* and *you* are absolutely presupposed one by the other; likewise, there can be no story without a narrator and without an audience (or reader).

Todorov (1966) makes the same gesture to communication theory when he says "the work is at the same time a discourse: there exists a narrator who relates the story; and there is opposite him a reader who perceives it" (p. 126). He further insists: "These two figures [of narrator and reader] are characteristic of every work of fiction" (p. 147).

Within such a framework, point of view has been commonly treated as a kind of "telling"—"first person narration" is one kind of narration, "third person narration" another. It is this latter which is equivalent to represented speech and thought. (See Tamir, 1976, p. 415.) But if represented speech and thought is thus subsumed under the communication model, the question naturally raised in this "third person narration" is "Who speaks?" A point of view is expressed, but, given its third person form, the logic of the communication hypothesis forces one to conclude that someone else tells it. This speaker is conveniently dubbed the "narrator," bringing with him, as the logic of this position also requires, a second point of view.

The word "telling" has another use in the critical literature on narrative fiction, however, where it is not so much taken as equivalent to linguistic performance but as only one of its modes. This is the contrast between "showing" and "telling" introduced into the critical terminology through Henry James and Percy Lubbock. (See Booth, 1961, pp. 3ff.) It has its equivalents elsewhere—in Lukács's "Narrate or Describe?" for instance. In James and Lubbock, the notion of point of view, or, at least, of third person point of view, is precisely defined in contra-distinction to telling, just as in Lukács the two present mutually exclusive alternatives. We can be told what a character does or thinks in a novel, or we can be "shown" it. And to show or represent a character's thoughts, the natural mode is represented speech and thought. In this view, the narrator does not intervene at all to interpret the consciousness represented—"the art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his story as a matter to be *shown,* to be so exhibited that it will tell itself" (Lubbock, 1957, p. 62).

For if in almost all modern commentary on the novel these two notions, "point of view" and "narrator's voice," divide between them whatever expressive import a narrative's sentences may have, the respective jurisdiction of the two terms is not the same in every narrative theory. We have in fact two radically different conceptions of the presentation of point of view in language and literature. In one, all language is seen as paradigmatically spoken, and all other uses are derivative from the spoken language. Hence, in all these derivative uses of language, a speaker appears whose presence gives language its characteristic structure. In the other, point of view becomes a concept which can be independent of the speaker's role in communication. Subjectivity is not

dependent on the communicative act, even if it is *shown* through language. And if it is not subordinated to the communicative function, then language can contain speakerless sentences.

Identifying these two competing theories of narrative style in modern discussions of point of view does not mean their antagonistic stances have previously been clearly spelled out. The same individual quite commonly adopts the terminology of both sides without a sense of their incompatibility. Any debate, however, must begin by presenting a rigorous statement of the two alternatives and, in particular, of the notion "point of view" as opposed to that of the speaking voice. Here, the analogy with visual perspective will not allow the formal argumentation required, for there is nothing immediately comparable to the relation between these two terms in the visual arts. The solution lies rather in a theory of subjectivity in language.

But making the two alternatives explicit is only the initial step toward deciding between them. For any two hypotheses can become self-perpetuating systems which can never manage to meet, to be compared, without the discovery of crucial evidence to test them and thus break the impasse of sterile debate at the purely theoretical level. This is where data must be rendered evidence by argument. It is the third style of reporting—or representing—speech and thought which provides the evidence required. . . .

Represented speech and thought is recognized as a distinct style by its departures from the spoken forms of reported speech and thought. . . .

Its resemblance to both direct and indirect speech has led commentators to describe it as a combination of the two. This vague and informal conception is not even observationally adequate. But it is by comparing represented speech and thought with direct and indirect speech that we can isolate its characteristics and eventually incorporate an account of it into the grammar.

• • • •

Our argument, which has been based on the body of sentences furnished by literary texts and our judgments of their acceptability, has a historical dimension as well. Neither the sentence of narration nor sentences representing consciousness exist in the spoken language. All our texts are literary and all are dated after a certain point in time. Nor is this fact accidental in our presentation. Narrative style as we have defined it, unlike language itself, has a determinable historical origin; no earlier examples are given among the data presented here, because no earlier ones exist. This presents a problem not ordinarily encountered in historical linguistics, which typically traces syntactic or sound changes through a series of spoken forms. The question which requires an atypical answer is: how then do unspoken forms arise?

A quite common position is one enunciated by Thibaudet for the appearance of represented speech and thought in particular: "a written style is renewed . . . only through a contact with speech which is at once close and original" (1935, p. 249). This is the assumption that natural linguistic change occurs only in speech and that writing only preserves outmoded forms. It considers the spoken language the repository of all forms generated by the synchronic grammar.

A form which has never appeared in speech is precisely the case which remains unexplained under this assumption. Such is the case presented by represented speech and thought, if not by sentences containing the aorist in French. The only recourse a theory which gives absolute priority to speech has is the notion that a form first observed in literary contexts is an artificial distortion devised by a single writer and that its subsequent dissemination among different writers and even across languages is the result of imitation or borrowing.

The striking fact of the widespread and almost simultaneous appearance of the two sentence types of narrative style in all the European languages makes the theory of influence and imitation implausible and suggests rather that the features of narrative style have their origin in some properties native to these languages, if not universal, and that they therefore arise spontaneously. At any rate, the possible alternative hypotheses about their origin seem to reduce to these two: either narrative style develops naturally and in conformity with linguistic structure or it is a grammatical deviation and hence an artificial manipulation of language. These are the terms under which Lips (1926) envisioned the competing historical theories about represented speech and thought: "did the different languages spontaneously create this type of syntax? or, on the contrary, would it be the case that it was born out of one particular idiom, from which the others profited by borrowing? And how was it spread from one language to another?" (p. 216)

The consensus of the earliest commentators on represented speech and thought tends toward a position stressing the style's naturalness and universality. Jespersen (1924) summarizes them as follows:

> Bally thought that this phenomenon was peculiar to French, but Lerch and Lorck give a great many German instances, though thinking that in German it may be due to French influence, especially to that of Zola(!). But it is very frequent in England (where it is found long before Zola's time, for instance in Jane Austen) and in Denmark, probably also in other countries (I have recently found Spanish examples), and it seems on the whole so natural that it may easily have come into existence independently in different places.[6]

Lips herself concludes that the style has "the character peculiar to a 'European' process, arising from certain underlying tendencies which relate languages to modern societies" (p. 219).

None of these commentators specifies, however, what underlying principles of grammar give rise to these tendencies. Our synchronic analysis of narrative style and the grammar proposed to explain it now enable us to locate precisely the source of those features marking it off from the spoken language. We will find them, not in some "European" process, but in universals of language common to both speech and writing.

Once having located the origins of narrative style in linguistic universals, we must then explain why it is not a constant feature of language through time—why the aorist in French was not always restricted to written contexts and why represented speech and thought did not always exist but rather emerges at a given historical moment. The explanation must be sought in

extra-linguistic factors, if the relevant linguistic universals are shared by both speech and writing.

Here, the fact that the appearance of the features defining narrative style is confined, historically as well as synchronically, to written contexts intervenes to supply the crucial factor. For a hypothesis which remains so far unexplored is that speech inhibits forms that writing does not—forms equally natural. More precisely, it is the dominance of the communicative function in speech which, I will argue, accounts for the absence of the features of narrative style in speech, and it is writing—or, more precisely, written composition—which frees linguistic performance from the tyranny of the communicative function.

In oral performance communication is inseparable from the other functions of language, which include what Kuroda (1976) calls "the objective function" or "the meaning-realizing act" and the expressive function. Both functions are epistemologically distinguishable from the communicative act. But in oral discourse, the communicative framework—the relation between SPEAKER and ADDRESSEE/HEARER—is inescapable. As long as speech remains the only possible realization of linguistic performance or even as long as writing continues to merely transcribe or even model itself on speech, then language remains in practice identical with linguistic communication.

It is writing and written composition, then, which, we shall propose, release language from its subjection to communication. Through this release, other functions of language can emerge and be apprehended in an unadulterated form. We have already analyzed these forms as both syntactic and stylistic phenomena and determined what the syntactic correlates of communication and expression are. This synchronic analysis of these grammatical forms now makes it possible to discover how the historical conditions created by writing and the laws of written composition interact with the grammar to give them a shape unlike any found in speech. Our research will proceed first through a historical survey of narrative style and, in particular, of the appearance and distribution of represented speech and thought, preliminary to proposing what in the grammar explains its almost simultaneous emergence in European literature. Under this hypothesis, narrative style is seen to arise historically, not by contact with speech nor by a unique creative act on the part of a single writer in violation of the principles of grammar, but in universal grammar. The dominant role played by the ascendancy of written over oral composition or over the transcription of oral performance in European history is the conclusion to be drawn from the distribution of sentences of narration and represented Es[7] in the various literary genres.

Narrative Style: A Historical but Universal Phenomenon

Represented speech and thought makes its appearance in the various European literatures between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. This can be established if we examine the claims to the contrary that the style appears as early as the beginning of the middle ages and even is found in the classical languages. Pascal (1977), for instance, writes that a history of represented speech and thought "would be an enormous task, would certainly include some medieval texts, and might begin with classical Greek" (p. 34).

The claim that instances of the style can be found in Greek and Latin finds little credence, however, from scholars of the classical languages, and no plausible examples have been proffered to support this claim. Juret (1925) argues that *le style indirect libre,* which he defines narrowly as non-subordinated indirect speech, is largely unknown in Latin texts. Juret's hastily argued hypothesis finds fuller support in E. C. Woodcock's (1959) careful discussion of reported speech in Latin. Although he accepts Jespersen's "represented speech" as an appropriate term for passages without an introductory clause, Woodcock shows that they are marked by the accusative + infinitive construction of *oratio obliqua.* For this reason, they do not conform to the definition of the style argued for in chapter 2. Patrick Diehl (unpublished letter) holds that "Latin writers seem to avoid pretending too close an acquaintance with the internal workings of their characters' psyches," and adds, "so far as I know, though the syntactic devices are rather different, the same can be said of Greek as well."

The opinion that represented speech and thought occurs in medieval literature is more often encountered. An example from *La Chanson de Roland* is cited in Lips (1926) and repeated in Ullmann (1964), but it can be shown that it is only questionably treated as represented speech. Another such questionable and recurring example from medieval French is one borrowed from G. Lerch by Vološinov (1973); the exact passage appears again in Ullmann, though Lerch is not there credited. It is taken from *The Canticle of St. Eulalie,* a poem of the second half of the ninth century. (The lines purported to be in represented thought are in italics.)

> Ell'ent adunet lo suon element;
> *melz sostendreiet les empedementz*
> *qu'elle perdesse sa Virginitet.*
> Poros furer morte a grand honestet.
>
> [She gathers her strength: *better that she undergo tortures than*
> *lose her virginity.* Thus she died with great honor.]
> (Vološinov, 1973, p. 150, fn. 7)

Vološinov explains in what way the passage can be read as represented thought thus: "Here, Lerch asserts, the saint's staunch, unshakable decision chimes with (*klingt zusammen*) the author's passionate stand on her behalf" (p. 150). His conclusion that the line does not attain the status of "a free stylistic device" is more cautious than Ullmann's assertion that represented thought "appears in the Sequence of Saint Eulalia," though a footnote qualifies his statement as only "the most probable interpretation of the lines" (p. 99). There is, however, little warrant for considering these isolated lines as represented thought since there are no clear syntactic indications—no exclamations attributed by parentheticals to the third person, no past tense cotemporal with a present time deictic, etc.—of the style. Given that there is no obstacle to interpreting the lines as a narrative statement and given the absence of clearer cases than this from medieval literature, we can conclude with Cohen (1954, p. 99) "following the lead of Marguerite Lips," that "the texts of Old French furnish a rather restricted number of examples . . . , nearly all of which are debatable."

Uspensky (1973) disputes the view given in L. A. Bulakhovskii "that quasi-direct discourse [represented speech and thought] is a new phenomenon in Russian, having been brought into the language under the influence of French" and claims to refute a more recent origin for the style by citing examples from the Russian chronicles, the Ipatev chronicle of the year 6454, for instance:

> Reche zhe im "Ol'ga, iako iaz" uzhe mstila esm' muzha svoego.
>
> [Olga said to them that I have already avenged my husband.]

And also, by examples from folklore:

> Govorit Staver syn Godinovich.—Chto ia s toboi svaechkoi ne igryval!
>
> [Says Staver son of Godinovich:—That I did not play on you with my big stick!] (p. 35)

I am unable to verify that these are indeed examples of represented speech. However, if the subordination of the quoted clause in Zavarin and Wittig's translation is as in the original, this suggests that the phenomenon Uspensky discusses here is not an example of the style—instead of sharing a non-subordinated E with direct speech and the non-appearance of first and second person for reported speaker and addressee/hearer with indirect speech, this construction rather shows the subordination of indirect speech and the shift to a new referent for *I* and *you* of direct speech.

Most commentators find the first instances of represented speech and thought in a fully developed form in French in *Les Fables* of La Fontaine (1621–95) and in English in Jane Austen (1775–1817), although Lips also cites cases from Sir Walter Scott. Examples of represented speech occur earlier in Fielding, and Margaret Doody has pointed out ones of represented thought in Fanny Burney. Pascal (1977) states that

> although the form crops up here and there since the Middle Ages, there is until modern times, after Flaubert, no continuous tradition of its use and transmission as a literary technique; until Flaubert no writer seems to have used it with a clear consciousness of its stylistic identity and meaning. So that, though no one can observe its appearance in this or that author since the Renaissance, one cannot draw a graph of a tradition or of an evolution from crude beginnings to artistic accomplishment. (P. 34)

Pascal cites its first appearance "as a prominent and continuous feature in a novel, in Goethe (1749–1832) and Jane Austen" (p. 34), analyzing convincingly and at length the style in both these writers. Thus, Pascal's discussion calls into question Vološinov's contention, following Lerch (1914), that represented speech and thought "is an extremely late development in German." "As a deliberate and full fledged device," Vološinov goes on to explain, "it is used for the first time by Thomas Mann in his novel *Buddenbrooks* (1901), apparently under the direct influence of Zola" (1973, p. 152). On the other hand, Dorrit Cohn (1966) claims "it had been used in mid-century by Otto Ludwig"

(p. 107). Though Vološinov's sketch of the style's history in Russian is brief, he suggests that one of its earliest appearances (if not the earliest) is in the novels of Puškin (1973, p. 155)[8] and cites an example from Dostoevskij's *The Idiot* (p. 156). Friedrich Todemann (1930) gives some examples in Spanish from Cervantes "y de las novelas de caballerías, sino también del Cantar de Mío Cid" (Otero, 1976, p. 29). The style in Pirandello's "Novelle per un anno" is discussed in Terracini (1966, pp. 354ff.); its appearance in Italian literature in general is treated in Herczeg (1963).

The point of the preceding survey is to establish the sudden and contemporaneous appearance of represented speech and thought at the beginning of the modern period, an appearance coinciding with the rise of the novel itself. By the mid-nineteenth century, the form was widespread in European fiction. In France, Flaubert exploited its possibilities fully and after him, Zola, to use Lips's phrase, "overuses the free indirect style; he was obsessed with it" (1926, p. 196). In English, there is scarcely a novelist who does not use it. It is employed increasingly throughout the nineteenth century, until writers like James, Joyce and Woolf exploit its full range of possibilities (and Sean O'Casey even uses it in his autobiography in the third person). In fact, one can plausibly maintain that there is scarcely a novel—and most especially a novel in the third person—which does not show this form.

There is good evidence that this stylistic phenomenon is not confined to Europe. We can hear in Lips's remark that it would not be astonishing to find represented speech and thought in still other languages (1926, p. 216) the echo of Kuroda's conclusion to his study of the "nonreportive" style in Japanese: "This distinction of the reportive and nonreportive styles might also be found in English grammar, perhaps in a more concealed way" (1973, p. 389; 1979, p. 199). In Kuroda (1973 and 1976), evidence is given that Japanese also possesses a sentence representing consciousness. Kuroda's arguments furnish the bases for the claim in Jo (1976, fn. 3) that Korean shows similarly interpreted constructions, and Guliz Kuruoglu argues in an unpublished paper that Turkish too has its counterpart of represented speech and thought.

Literary history thus directs us to look for a universal source for the stylistic form we have called the linguistic "representation of consciousness." But the answer is not to be sought in literary history, nor in a comparative study of the structure of represented Es across languages. Rather, it is linguistic theory and, in particular, in the account it provides of the represented E in English and French, which will allow us to construct a hypothesis for the style's appearance and development. The myriad examples from diverse languages and writers all point to a unitary phenomenon which can be captured by general principles and postulate these principles as belonging to universal grammar.

Furthermore, the existence of a universal source is the only likely hypothesis for the style's widespread use, given the failure to convincingly demonstrate that the form is derived from any one single source or writer and propagated through imitation. In fact, a really adequate imitation hypothesis is not easily formulated. For how can one imitate a style whose features are only implicit in the works providing the models and nowhere set down explicitly before 1887,[9] without having recourse to the underlying principles of gram-

mar—and, when the work imitated is in a language foreign to the imitator, without recourse to universal grammar? In other words, the imitation hypothesis, if made precise, would reduce to the explanation from universal grammar. For not every writer using represented Es exploits all their inherent grammatical possibilities or extends them in the same direction. Instead, writers using the style seem to grasp its underlying principles and so develop it anew.

That is, both an imitation model and an evolution model always have the problem of explaining the transition from one stage to another. If, in some stage of the style's development, its use shows those nonembeddable expressive elements directly generated under E whose interpretation always implies reflective consciousness, while all previous uses show only embeddable expressive elements, no imitation model could explain how one stage is transformed into the next without its being reduced to a model which locates the source of change either in the grammar itself or in its interaction with some outside force.

As a matter of fact, however, the real course of the style's appearance in history is even more problematic for an imitation model, if not for an evolutionary model as well. For what is striking is the absence of a transitional period in its development. Instead of finding intermediate versions of a style for representing consciousness in the early period of the development of represented speech and thought, this style seems to spring full-born into literary usage. As Pascal (1977) writes, "when it first appears . . . , it is already used with the greatest skill and propriety. This fact alone seems to suggest that, with such slight literary antecedents, there must be some linguistic habit in common usage on which these authors were drawing" (p. 34).

In other words, explaining the origin of represented speech and thought requires explaining how writers often working unknown to one another and ignorant of one another's work and of any explicit treatment of the rules governing the style know how to use it. The same question can be raised, *mutatis mutandis,* for readers faced for the first time with a linguistic form unfamiliar to them from their experience as speakers (and this encounter is not only a part of the style's past, but is repeated each time a new reader reads for the first time a novel using such represented Es): how do they know how to interpret it?

Generative grammar supplies an explanatory notion more precise and predictive than Pascal's behavioristic concept of "linguistic habit" as a model for the structure of this shared knowledge of writer and reader: the speaker's linguistic competence, his internalization of the grammatical rules and, in particular, of the principles of universal grammar. Without the notion of an abstract competence, the early commentators on represented speech and thought were unable to proceed beyond intuition and discover the formal principles of the style's derivation, both historically and synchronically.

We are now in a position to say what these universals are: our analysis of represented speech and thought and represented Es in general reveals that the expressive function is theoretically distinct from the communicative function and that grammatical theory requires the notions SELF and NOW, in addition to the notions SPEAKER and PRESENT. These separate universal constructs of grammatical theory, as part of the speaker's implicit knowledge, represent

potentials of language which may not be realized separately in performance, but which the speaker is capable of producing and interpreting separately—is "competent" to produce, in the strict sense. This holds true whether or not he is called upon to do so, i.e., whether or not he writes or reads a novel utilizing represented Es.

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The ingredients for represented speech and thought are thus given in universal grammar. But its appearance could not be predicted either from an a priori assumption that language is equivalent to linguistic communication or from the facts of the spoken language alone. In communication, SELF is realized morphologically by the same form used for SPEAKER—a fact captured by priority of SPEAKER. Hence, in speech, *I* masks the dual role it plays and unites expression and communication, as we have already seen. It is because SELF is defined independently of SPEAKER that the former can be realized as a non-first person, either synchronically or at some moment in the history of language. What is required for this to come about is (i) the elimination of the first person and (ii) the absence of a second person.

Similarly, NOW must be defined independently of PRESENT. When an E contains a communication between an *I* and a *you,* NOW and PRESENT necessarily coincide. But if an ADDRESSEE/HEARER is lacking, as well as a present moment referring to an act of utterance, an exchange between two interlocutors, NOW may be cotemporal with PAST. When these conditions exist—absence of *you* and/or of *I* and absence of PRESENT—represented thought emerges.

There is only an apparent circularity in our argument: the represented E is immanent in language, because SELF and NOW are defined independently of SPEAKER and PRESENT in universal grammar and hence, for all time, regardless of whether the represented E is actualized in a particular language at a particular moment in its history; nevertheless, the separate existence of these four terms in the speaker's internalized grammar and, therefore, their necessity for grammatical theory, is only revealed by the evidence of represented Es, and so the scientific discovery of the separate existence of SELF and NOW is dependent on—must await—the appearance of represented Es.

Furthermore, once subjectivity is distanced from the communicative act and caught in the NOW-in-the-PAST, which is really the NOW distanced from the PRESENT, then a further byproduct is the pure, objective statement, divorced both from communication and its PRESENT and from subjectivity and its NOW. The sentence of narration per se remains as what is left over after subjectivity has been removed. For this reason, the historical appearance of narration is coincident with that of represented speech and thought. Since the unambiguous litmus test for narration is its strictly literary tense, the appearance of narration, in French at least, is tied to the dropping of the use of the aorist from the spoken language. Saunders (1955), we recall, dates the inception of its banishment from speech from the sixteenth century: "Henri Estienne, the sixteenth-century grammarian, records the first symptom of the paralysis overtaking the spoken past definite when he forbids the use of the tense to

denote events happening on the day of their telling and rebukes the foreigner for saying 'il me vint veoir aujourd'huy'" (p. 96). (Note the unacceptable co-occurrence of the aorist and the present time deictic.) In other words, Estienne records the moment when the aorist is in the process of distancing itself from the act of utterance and its moment. We remember also that the first clear-cut instances of represented speech and thought are found, by common agreement, in La Fontaine. Hence, French most unambiguously links the historical appearance of narration with that of represented Es, just as the appearance of the two are linked synchronically in the grammar. These two sentences—one realizing what Kuroda (1976) calls "the objective function," the other representing the subjective—divide the domain of knowledge embodied in language. It is this knowledge hidden in language and its dualistic form which philosophy has questioned and which it has been the historic role of the literary to bring to light. Thus, literary history externalizes a truth which language knows, but which it cannot speak. Or if it speaks it, it cannot be overheard.

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Conclusion

Narrative style is thus the product of the interaction of grammar and writing. One supplies the principles and rules internalized in linguistic competence whereby the forms of linguistic performance are predicted, and the other creates the conditions for the realization of one of these forms of performance. This does not mean that every form of linguistic performance which arises in the history of language can be foretold in advance; but rather, that once it appears, it should be possible to discover the properties of language from which it follows. In this sense, what creates the condition for a new form creates also the conditions for the discovery of some property of universal grammar which remains hidden until the new form gives evidence of its existence.

Such, we saw, was the case for the constructs SPEAKER, SELF, PRESENT and NOW in their relation to the node E. Not only are SELF and NOW justified as independent notions of the grammar because of their independent appearance in represented speech and thought, but they are also not equivalent to every use of language, as witness their disappearance in the sentence of narration.

The spontaneous appearance of narrative style and, in particular, of represented speech and thought, in western literature, is the result, then, of the transformation of western culture into a literate culture. And, between oral and literate cultures there can be no transitional text. The two cultures might coexist in the same place, but they still remain separate. This is a point made by Lord (1965) apropos of the disappearance of techniques of oral composition, but it is equally appropriate as a commentary on the sudden appearance of narrative fiction in western literary history:

> It is worthy of emphasis that the question we have asked ourselves is whether there can be such a thing as a transitional *text;* not a *period* of transition between oral and written style, or between illiteracy and literacy, but a *text,* product of the creative brain of a single individual. When this emphasis is clear, it becomes

> possible to turn the question into whether there can be a single individual who in composing an epic would think now in one way and now in another, or, perhaps, in a manner that is a combination of two techniques. I believe that the answer must be in the negative, because the two techniques are, I submit, contradictory and mutually exclusive. Once the oral technique is lost, it is never regained. The written technique, on the other hand, is not compatible with the oral technique, and the two could not possibly combine, to form another, a third, a 'transitional' technique. (p. 129)

So, too, synchronically, when a sentence no longer occurs in the context of discourse, it assumes the structure of one of the two narrative sentence types. The moment which, in ushering in the era of writing, reveals the two sides of knowledge contained in language by separating them into the two sentences of narration, also engenders the modern division between history and consciousness, object and subject. Narration is thus that literary form which exhibits the very structure of modern thought.

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These two kinds of knowledge exist also, before narration, in the language of discourse. There, however, they are not recognizable as such, because they are subsumed under the intention to communicate: to narrate in speech is to tell someone something which happened; to represent subjectivity is to express it—subjectivity is "pressed out," betrayed, made public, i.e., conveyed to another. Only in narrative are the linguistic functions which give grammatical shape to these two kinds of knowledge apprehendable in themselves, because only there are they distanced from communication and made the object of a contemplative gaze. This distancing effect shared by both recounting and representing is captured in their shared prefix *re-* which distinguishes both from the direct presentation possible in speech. Both, as linguistic acts, are at one remove from the direct conveying of meaning, whether objective or subjective. In discourse, because meaning is conveyed and consciousness expressed, the language required for their articulation is a transparent medium. It is the language of narrative which renders this mediating language opaque by separating it from the communicative function. By purely and simply recounting events, language is transformed into an externalized, objective knowledge; by simply representing consciousness, language renders its subjective aspects opaque. Just as it is narration which knows what happened, so it is the language of represented consciousness which knows as its subject knows. Event and subjectivity become reified as narration or history and represented consciousness.

It is the act of written composition, as a form of linguistic performance, which makes the distancing of narrative language possible. Like speech, it occurs in time, but its product can outlast the moment of production, while speech dies in the air the moment it is uttered. A recording of speech captures not just the product but the process as well, speech act and language inextricably linked. Written transcription already begins the process of distancing the two.

Ultimately, as we have seen, writing makes possible the development of a narrative style where the act of production, of performance, leaves no trace in linguistic structure. When a recorded speech is replayed, the PRESENT, the HERE and NOW of the recorded speech is forever fixed at the instant of the original recording. But the HERE and NOW of the novel need not be the moment or the place in which the novelist wrote. That moment or place, perhaps so important for the genesis of the novel, does not exist in the fictional world its language creates by the narrative fiat.[10] Nor does the novelist exist there as a voice taking linguistic responsibility for its sentences, as in a recording the speaker's presence is captured both in grammatical structure and in the sound of the voice.

Because the writer of fiction nowhere "speaks" in the novel, the finished work has a different relation to the act which produced it than is the case with speech. Speech occurs in time, and the product of this process is structured by this subservience to time. The sentences and their formatives are necessarily spoken in a certain order, and that is the order they retain in speech as a product. Hence, also the false starts, repetitions and slips of the tongue that make up real speech. The phenomenon of direct quotation, which is not a recording, shows that we perceive speech differently, filtering out the performance errors and conferring on the speech act a grammatical perfection it may not actually have had.

The process of writing—what is called "composition"—also occurs in time, but its product can free itself from the structure imposed by time, by sequence, by the order of production. The writer, of course, is subject to the rules of the grammar; furthermore, at some level, he continues to produce from beginning to end. But sentences so written, or parts of them, can be altered; they can be rewritten, reworked, revised, and the sequential order of syntax ignored at the level of composition. That is, a word can be changed at any point. While the syntax of the finished piece must be in conformity with the order specified by the grammar and while at some level the sentences must still be produced in that order, composition and its revisions may violate that order. More important, the larger unit we have called the TEXT can be composed in an order which the finished piece may in no way betray. This is not true of speech, however. Only in writing may the process of revision, which is part of the process of composition, vanish in the finished piece, the "clean copy," leaving no sign of what the first or any intervening versions might have looked like.[11]

The result is the idealization of language which constitutes narrative style and the narrative TEXT and in which subjective and objective knowledge are thrust into the center of modern consciousness. By this step both can become the object of a scientific inquiry, can be considered as a knowledge in some sense unknown, its properties not self-evident, not available to the introspection of the conscious speaking subject who possesses it, and hence, to be reconstituted in an idealized form by a scientific language.

We might, in fact, take as emblems of these two kinds of knowledge—one subjective and the other objective, but both objectivized—two mecha-

nisms or machines—Huyghens's clock and Huyghens's lens. One, like narration, "tells time," counts its discrete units and assigns them an order and like narration, "incarnates the passage of time" (Lacan, 1978, p. 94). The other captures and externalizes the gaze behind which is always placed the silent mind, the means by which the world is represented to the mind, the lens which focuses an image of the world as seen. (It is, no doubt, not accidental that it was the period in intellectual history sometimes called "cartesian" which saw the emergence in France of the sentence with an unspoken historical tense and, at the same time, in the *Fables* of La Fontaine, the sentence of represented speech and thought and that it was this same period in which the pendulum clock and the telescope were invented.)[12]

In these two mechanisms, the clock and the lens, are the models of the two kinds of knowledge narrative joins to create that idealized construct which is narrative fiction. They are our knowledge, but in ourselves we cannot know them directly. All modern exploration of the mind and the world arrives at this same no-man's-land of unknown knowledge. In language, this knowledge remains unknown as long as it remains spoken—that is, in man. Its existence can be seized and subjected to a self-conscious, objective scrutiny only when it is separated from its human author and incarnated in the text.

This is as true for subjective as for objective knowledge. Our analogy between the lens and the representation of consciousness allows us to proceed one step further and to clarify something about the nature of all artistic representation, something which our linguistic analysis points to. In doing so, we can add something to the traditional notion of art as the mirror held up to nature, remembering that the mirror is akin to the lens.[13]

Just as the clock embodies the fact that time passes and is inherently (re) countable, so the lens is witness to the fact that representation, even a representation of the mind, need not imply a representing mind. It may be true that the lens captures in its relation to what it focuses on the stance or point of view of any subject looking through it, but the image on its glass is nevertheless independent of the mind behind it, registering this image and representing it to itself. Frege (1977) makes the same point in also using the analogy with the lens to distinguish "sense," "reference" and "idea." "The optical image in the telescope is indeed one-sided and dependent upon the standpoint of observation, but it is still objective, inasmuch as it can be used by several observers. At any rate it could be arranged for several to use it simultaneously. But each one would have his own retinal image" (p. 60).

This same could be said of an artist creating a representation as well as of his audience, the observers who each reexperience the work. It is not necessary for an artist or his audience to be reflected in any mirroring surfaces he represents, for his reflection in "the interior of the picture" is "what is intimately foreign to it: the gaze which has organized it and the gaze for which it is displayed" (Foucault, 1973, p. 15; in French, 1966, p. 30). It is the existence of a machine with a lens which allows us to grasp this, as Lacan has argued.

> Imagine that all mankind has disappeared from the earth. I say *mankind,* given the high value placed upon consciousness. This is already enough to raise the

> question: *What remains in the mirror*? But let us go so far as to imagine that all living beings have vanished. All that remains then are waterfalls and springs—and thunder and lightning as well. The reflection in the mirror, the reflection in the lake—do they still exist?
>
> It is plain that they still exist. And this is for a very simple reason—at the advanced stage of civilization to which we have arrived, which surpasses by a lot our illusions about consciousness, we have built machines which we can without the least implausibility imagine complicated enough to develop film by themselves, to arrange them in little canisters, and to deposit them in the refrigerator. Every living creature having vanished, the camera can still record the reflection of the mountain in the lake, or that of the Café de Flore crumbling into dust in total solitude. (1978, p. 62)

In his *Orphée,* Cocteau, by an ingenious technical solution, was able to photograph a mirror without reflecting the camera—what would have violated the illusion of fiction. The mirror held up to nature by the artist deflects in reflecting. But what may have been a trick at the level of technique was perfectly legitimate and necessary for the creation of a fictional construct. For the writer, however, language has already solved the technical problem of silencing the speaker and his authority.

Notes

1. In direct speech, a character's speech or thoughts are given as the character is understood to have formulated them. In indirect speech, a character's speech or thoughts are explicitly reported of, or attributed to, the character by grammatically subordinating or embedding them within the speech or thoughts of another. M. McK.

2. Discussing Woolf's style, David Daiches (1960) refers to "the frequent commencement of a paragraph with 'for,' the author's conjunction (not the thinker's), whose purpose is to indicate the vague, pseudo-logical connection between the different sections of a reverie" (p. 209). While his explanation for the function of this *for* is persuasive, it seems to argue rather for including it as part of the "thinker's" consciousness. See also Lips (1926), p. 129.

3. An asterisk marks linguistic constructions that are grammatically unacceptable. M. McK.

4. S, Ss = sentence, sentences. M. McK.

5. Spatial terms which are defined in terms of a linguistic point of view do exist; such is the case for deictics of space, such as *here* and deictic verbs like *come* and *bring* treated in Fillmore (1966, 1971, 1972, 1974). But the distinctness of space deictics from non-deictic prepositions, directional and locational adverbs, verbs, etc.—i.e., the fact that the overwhelming majority of locatives are not deictic—argues rather for a rejection of the idea that linguistic descriptions, and hence sentences are necessarily related to a point of view, analogous to the fact that every visual field has a perspective.

From the specifically linguistic evidence, we conclude rather that not every lexical item or sentence has a subjective reference. Some are inherently subjective (for instance, Milner's Nouns of Quality). Their use implies that a subject is implicated in the interpretation of the sentence. Other categories are subjective in certain contexts. And some are never subjective.

This is a very different schema from that underlying works like Uspensky (1973). For example, in his discussion of "naming as a problem of point of view" (pp. 20ff.)

and, in specific, of the various epithets (appellations) applied to Napoleon in Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* Uspensky assumes that every possible name for Napoleon necessarily implies the attitude of a linguistically represented subject who chooses this name among many, although, in his eminently empiricist approach, Uspensky never makes this assumption explicit. For Uspensky, there is no neutral term for the man referred to by the name "Napoleon."

But the names designating Napoleon Uspensky considers—"Buonaparte," "Bonaparte," "consul," "emperor," "general," "the Usurper and Enemy of the Human Race," "the Chief of the French Government," "*le grand homme,*" "l'empereur Napoléon," "Napoleon," "Bonaparty" and "Napoleon Bonaparte"—are not *linguistically* subjective (*le grand homme* and *Bonaparty* possibly excepted). They are only pragmatically so.

Such is not the case with one other class of names Uspensky considers. This is the class of Russian diminutives such as "Vasyuk" derived from "Vasily" (ibid., p. 24) which are typically in the vocative case. Diminutives are linguistically subjective or expressive, requiring some reference to a subject for their interpretation. They indicate an intimate relation between the subject and the person so designated. It is not clear whether they should be restricted to communication or discourse. Their vocative form suggests that they should be, but the fact that they may appear in represented thought reveals that they need not function only as vocatives. They may even lose their subjective force and become an ordinary proper name, as witness their use in pure narration. But where they retain this subjectivity, diminutives are distinguished from other names in requiring even out of any context a reference to the linguistic subject.

In addition to the kinship terms discussed in chapter 1, another possible example is certain terms of address, such as *your Ladyship, your Highness,* etc. While the category is primarily a social, and hence, extra-linguistic one, what makes it linguistic is the obligatory presence of the second or third person possessive pronoun, marking the term by the relation between subject and addressee it represents. That is, one cannot speak of "a Ladyship" or "the Highness." Such terms appear as expressive elements in represented speech and thought, such as in this passage from *The Years:* "She had everything ready—her ladyship's coat, skirt, and the bag with the ticket in it" (p. 287). "Her ladyship" indicates that the sentence is from the servant's ("her") point of view.

6. Cf. also Lips (1926): "The free indirect style is an interlinguistic process. It has been found in Italian, in Swedish, in Spanish and in Russian" (p. 216).

7. E, Es = expression, expressions. M. McK.

8. Vološinov (1973) writes: "It was on the grounds of the young Puškin's Byronic rhetoric that quasi-direct discourse (presumably for the first time) took shape in Russian" (p. 139).

9. "The first mention of quasi-direct discourse as a special form for reporting an utterance, on a par with direct and indirect discourse, was made by Tobler in 1887" (Vološinov, 1973, p. 142). A historical sketch of the early discussion of the style is given in Vološinov, pp. 143ff. Ullmann (1964) points to Proust's essay on Flaubert's style of 1920 (1971) as an early discussion of the style in French done in ignorance of Bally's (1912) article giving the style its French name. Unlike rhetorical figures, it has no international name. The continued lack of any one current English term for the style attests to the general failure to recognize it as a distinct style with great significance for the study of language and consciousness. On the underestimation of its importance in English and American criticism, see Cohn (1966).

10. Whenever a HERE or NOW referring to the moment of composition appears, it is felt as an intrusion—hence the term current in criticism: "authorial intrusion" (see Lubbock, 1957). Perhaps these moments are gathered into the fiction as well, as Hamburger argues. Consider the passages below:

> They went into the Sun, the old posting hotel that now is the motorcar hotel. (Lawrence, *The First Lady Chatterley,* p. 231)
>
> le moment n'était pas encore venu de livrer ces appartements meublés vingt ans plus tôt avec an amour égaré aux décorateurs de mil neuf cent vingt-cinq. (Paul Nizan, *La Conspiration,* p. 22)
>
> [the moment had not yet arrived to hand over these apartments furnished twenty years before with a misguided love to the decorators of 1925.]
>
> il y avait au mur des rayons dont les livres étaient moins reliés que ceux du grand salon, une mauvaise lithographie de Lénine, une assez bonne reproduction du Descartes de Hals et un petit paysage métaphysique de Chirico, qui rappelait assez bien les réserves d'un musée provincial sous une lune de théâtre et qui date l'époque où se déroule cette histoire de jeunes gens. (Ibid., p. 22)
>
> [there were shelves on the wall whose books were less beautifully bound than those of the drawing room, there was a poor lithograph of Lenin, a fairly good reproduction of the Descartes by Hals and a little metaphysical landscape of Chirico's, which called to mind the storeroom of a provincial museum under a theatrical moon and which dates the period in which these young people's story takes place.]

But the "old posting inn" is at the fictional town of Uthwaite, with its "twisted spire" (p. 231) and not at the real Chesterfield, so that the "now" of the text, even when it is contemporal with the present tense, becomes fictionalized by its inclusion into a narrative where place is fictionalized. While the place names in the examples from *La Conspiration* refer to real places, it can be argued (see Hamburger, 1973, pp. 92, 112) that they also become fictional by the fact of their occurring in a narrative, as does their reference to a present NOW. But, in any case, sentences like those above are breaks in the narration (and, of course, in French, the aorist does not appear).

11. This might suggest another reason for a writer choosing the *skaz* [Russian formalist term for a mode of narration that draws attention to itself. M. McK.] form besides wanting to portray the speaking voice or create a lying narrator. The *skaz* form would permit the stages of composition or the mistakes of performance to be included. A good example is provided by Conrad's frame stories, where Marlow recounts the story to a fictionally and grammatically present audience. Yet Conrad never presents Marlow through the accents of his speech. Indeed, except for the occasional reminder of the presence of an audience by the presence of a second person, the text might read like first person narration. But Marlow does interrupt his narrative to ask his audience if they follow him, to comment on the insufficiencies of his words to convey his experience, in short, to make the process of composition, the struggle for the right words, to be a part of the work itself: "You have no idea how effective such a . . . a . . . faculty can be" (p. 239); "'something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to . . .' He broke off" (p. 222); "I did not see the real significance of that wreck at once. I fancy I see it now, but I am not sure—not at all. Certainly the affair was too stupid—when I think of it—to be altogether natural. Still . . ." (p. 238). The problem of giving articulation to his experience is expounded at length in one passage:

> "I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream—making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams . . . "
>
> He was silent for a while.

"... No, it is impossible; it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence—that which makes its truth, its meaning—its subtle and penetrating essence. It is impossible. We live, as we dream—alone ...," p. 246.

It is well-known that Conrad himself found writing—composition—a tortuous process and that he labored over his style, searching painstakingly for the right word (see Said, 1975, pp. 233ff.). Yet the end-product, if cast in the form of narration, could not betray his labor and uncertainty. It could only be placid and sure. Since Conrad has as one of his themes the impossibility of finding an adequate language for conveying the horrors of imperialism to those who have not experienced it, he creates a storyteller who can comment on the language of the story itself, i.e., a *skaz* storyteller.

12. Clocks for telling time had, of course, existed earlier, just as telling stories had. What was new about Huyghens' clock was that it was exact—it was a time-telling device designed for scientific experiments. While narration per se is not to be understood as a more exact method of recounting, it can be considered as a sign of the new concern with measuring the past objectively. This is reflected in the French grammarians' concern with distinguishing *passé proche, futur proche, passé éloigné, futur éloigné,* and so on. (There is perhaps some connection here with the Royal Society's concern in this period with developing a precise language for the use of science.)

13. The fascination with the mirror in seventeenth-century France is most obviously reflected in the *galérie des glaces* at Versailles. Again, we might connect this with the importance accorded the synchronization of the clocks in the palace.

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23

Amélie Oksenberg Rorty

Characters, Persons, Selves, Individuals

The concept of a person is not a concept that stands still, hospitably awaiting an analysis of its necessary and sufficient conditions. Our vocabulary for describing persons, their powers, limitations, and alliances is a very rich one. By attending to the nuances of that vocabulary we can preserve the distinctions that are often lost in the excess of zeal that is philosophic lust in action: abducting a concept from its natural home, finding conditions that explain the possibility of any concept in that area, and then legislating that the general conditions be treated as the core essential analysis of each of the variants. Such legislation—enshrining general and necessary preconditions as essential paradigms—is tantamount to arbitrary rule. We have not furnished an argument that socially defined entities such as nations, families, and persons, varying culturally and historically in their extensions and the criteria for their differentiation, have a place in a tidy taxonomic tree, neatly defined by genera, species, and varieties. Nor could such a proof be constructed, because there is not one to be had. Because the definitions of such entities change historically, forced by changes in social conditions and in answer to one another's weighty inconsistencies, there are layers and accretions of usages that can neither be forced into a taxonomy nor be safely amputated.

"Heroes," "characters," "protagonists," "actors," "agents," "persons," "souls," "selves," "figures," "individuals" are all distinguishable. Each inhabits a different space in fiction and in society. Some current controversies about criteria for personal identity, for characterizing and reidentifying human individuals, are impasses because the parties in the dispute have each selected distinct strands in a concept that has undergone dramatic historical changes; each has tried to make his strand serve as the central continuous thread. But criteria for reidentifying characters are different from those for reidentifying figures, and both differ from the criteria that identify selves or individuals. The concept of a person is but one in the area for which it has been used as a general class name. There is good reason for this; but we cannot understand that reason until we trace the historical sequence. The explanation of the recent concentration on the criteria for personal identity, rather than character identity or individual identity, is not that it is logically prior to the other concepts in that area, but that it affords a certain perspective on human agency. Before we can see what has seemed central about personal identity, we must trace the history of the notion.

Characters are delineated; their traits are sketched; they are not presumed

to be strictly unified. They appear in novels by Dickens, not those by Kafka. Figures appear in cautionary tales, exemplary novels, and hagiography. They present narratives of types of lives to be imitated. Selves are possessors of their properties. Individuals are centers of integrity; their rights are inalienable. Presences are descendants of souls; they are evoked rather than represented, to be found in novels by Dostoyevsky, not those by Jane Austen.

The effects of each of these on us and our political uses of their various structures differ radically. Indeed, we are different entities as we conceive ourselves enlightened by these various views. Our powers of actions are different, our relations to one another, our properties and proprieties, our characteristic successes and defeats, our conceptions of society's proper structures and freedoms will vary with our conceptions of ourselves as characters, persons, selves, individuals.

I want to give a skeleton outline of some of the intellectual, emotional, and social spaces in which each of these move and have their being, to depict their structures, their tonalities and functions. I shall perforce use the expressions "person" and "individual" neutrally, to designate the entire class of expressions that refer to the entities we have invented ourselves to be, but I shall argue that this usage does not reflect the ontological or the logical priority of those concepts.

Characters

In beginning with characters, we have already leaped some distance into the story: the Greek concept of character has itself already tamed, socialized, naturalized heroes and protagonists. The fate of heroes is their parentage. To be the child of Athene or of the house of Atreus fixes the major events of one's life, determines one's tasks, and even one's capacities to meet them. Yet at the same time the hero is known by his deeds: setting himself superhuman tasks, proving himself worthy of divine regard, his achievements are in the end acts of heroism rather than heroic performances. What was originally a performance of great deeds becomes courage and endurance in the face of fate and chance; what was originally a test of prowess becomes fortitude in the recognition of finitude. As the hero's distance from the gods increases, his heroism comes to be exemplified in his character rather than in sheer glory of his action.

Between the hero and the character stands the protagonist: the one who, through successful and bold combat, reveals his true nature, in ancient terms, his lineage. Such protagonists were often foundlings, whose *agones* with forces that might be thought beyond one of such birth revealed their true powers and thus their parentage. But this subtle shift emphasizes the powers of the protagonist, powers revealed in his *agones;* and it is now these powers that determine who he really is.

Oedipus begins as an epic hero, as the king; but he undergoes a new as well as old *agon,* and so ends by depicting the drama of one who has achieved character. He revealed himself to be not only the king but kingly. He transcended—and fulfilled—his fatal lineage. In comparison to heroes, characters are set in *bas relief;* they *are* their individual powers and dispositions. That their stories are set by oracles and inheritance is less important to their identi-

fication than the traits manifest in the ways they fulfill prophecy and work through their inheritance. Both strands are still present, but the order of significance is reversed, the brocade turned inside out.

The characters of speech and writing are the sketches and lines of which language is composed, the elementary signs from which complex structures of meaning are constructed. There is all the comfort and sanity of closure: finite rules of combination and transformation make language, narrative, and social life possible. The qualities of characters are the predictable and reliable manifestations of their dispositions: and it is by these dispositions that they are identified. The elements of character tend to become stoic rather than elemental forces. Theophrastus's characters remain fixed; they are not transformed by the unfolding of events. On the contrary, their dispositional characteristics allow them to be used to develop a narrative or to stabilize the structure of a society. Characters are, by nature, defined and delineated. If they change, it is because it is in their character to do so under specific circumstances. Their natures form their responses to experiences, rather than being formed by them.

In its origins, the psychological theory of character derives traits and temperaments, dispositionally analyzed, from the balance of elements constituting an individual. The psychology of character rests in physiology. Since the elements out of which characters are composed are repeatable and their configurations can be reproduced, a society of characters is in principle a society of repeatable and indeed replaceable individuals. In a world of characters, the criteria of identification are not designed to isolate unique individuals; the criteria of reidentification are not criteria of individuation. What is of interest is the configuration of reliable traits, the range of habits and dispositions, the structure of their interaction under various sorts of circumstance and stress, as they age. The physical constitutions of misers or people with choleric or sanguine temperaments will set the ways in which they develop habits under various sorts of social conditions; within limits, it is their character that determines their responses to social and environmental conditions, rather than these conditions determining their character.

In the theory of character there is no mind-body problem: without reducing either to the other, physical and psychological traits are fused as different aspects of a single organism. Mind is the organization of the living body, whose "parts" are identifiable through their functional activity. What cannot see is not really an eye but only the sort of flesh that normally is eye-flesh. Soul is not a separate substance lodged in the body; it is the living principle, the organic force of some sorts of substances.

Nor do characters have identity crises: they are not presumed to be strictly unified. Dispositional traits form an interlocking pattern, at best mutually supportive but sometimes tensed and conflicted. There is no presumption of a core that owns these dispositions. Some characters are sparsely defined and tightly organized; others flow in complex systems reaching diagonally out of an imaginary frame, with little need for harmony among the main lines of their development. Disharmony among characteristics bodes trouble; it is likely to lead to failure in action, but not to a crisis of identity. Because characters are defined by their characteristics rather than by the ultimate principles

that guide their choices, from their souls, they need not in normal circumstances force or even face the question of which of their dispositions is dominant. Of course a character may find himself in tragic circumstances with his dispositions in destructive conflict. When this happens in such a way that no resolution is available, a character can indeed be torn. Sometimes the dispositions he reveals when he is sundered reveal his grandeur; but these resplendent dispositions are no more the core of a unique individuality than are the dispositions that conflicted with one another. The character is the entire configuration, without the traits seen as layers with a core holding them together.

To know what sort of character a person is, is to know what sort of life is best suited to bring out his potentialities and functions. Theories of the moral education of characters have strong political consequences. Not all characters are suited to the same sorts of lives: there is no ideal type for them all, even when, according to some social needs or social theories, they are hierarchically arranged. If one tries to force the life of a bargainer on the character of a philosopher, one is likely to encounter trouble, sorrow, and the sort of evil that comes from mismatching life and temperament. Characters formed within one society and living in circumstances where their dispositions are no longer needed—characters in time of great social change—are likely to be tragic. Their virtues lie useless or even foiled; they are no longer recognized for what they *are;* their motives and actions are misunderstood. The magnanimous man in a petty bourgeois society is seen as a vain fool; the energetic and industrious man in a society that prizes elegance above energy is seen as a bustling boor; the meditative person in an expansive society is seen as melancholic. Such subtle versions of the theory of character as Aristotle's emphasize the duality of habits, showing how habits that can be exercised for good are the very same habits that can effect harm. Only the empowered are capable of either vice or virtue. Two individuals of the same character will fare differently in different polities, not because their characters will change through their experiences (though different aspects will become dominant or recessive) but simply because a good fit of character and society can conduce to well-being and happiness, while a bad fit produces misery and rejection. Both generate characteristic flowering or decay. Societies at war give courageous characters a large scope, good latitudes for power and action; the same character will lie fallow and unused, restless in societies that prize aesthetic or religious contemplation. A courageous man will find his character exercised and his life fulfilled in the former society, but is likely to be regarded and so become a factious and angry man in the latter.

In fiction, characters are dear to us because they are predictable, because they entitle us to the superiority of gods who can lovingly foresee and thus more readily forgive what is fixed. "To be a character" is to maintain a few qualities, nourish them to excess until they dominate and dictate all others. A character is delineated and thus generally delimited. To "have character" is to have reliable qualities, to hold tightly to them through the temptations to swerve and change. A person of character is neither bribed nor corrupted; he stands fast, is steadfast. Of course there are, at all times and places, social and political pressures on people to think of themselves as characters, people of

character, whose public performances are reliable. Before the contrast of "inner" and "outer" comes into play, characters are seen externally, their choices and decisions flow predictably from their constitutions and temperaments. There is not a moment when the inner voice speaks while the outer body is silent. Politically, characters are stable, their roles and even their occupations follow from their natures, *are* their natures.

Because characters are public persons, even their private lives can have universal form, general significance. The dramatic character, writ large, can represent for everyman what only later came to be thought of as the inner life of some; it can portray the myth, the conflicts, reversals, and discoveries of each person, each *polis.*

Figures

Figures are defined by their place in an unfolding drama; they are not assigned roles because of their traits, but rather have the traits of their prototypes in myth or sacred script. Figures are characters writ large, become figureheads; they stand at the prow leading the traveler, directing the ship.

Biblical and sacred literature provide the figures of the stories of Adam and Christ, the stories of fall and redemption; the Homeric poems also present their cast. In more recent literature, Charles Williams and C. S. Lewis are, rather self-consciously, trying to revive not only a type of literature but an interpretation of human agency. Like some of Faulkner's people, they present us with figures in modern dress.

Sometimes figures are identified by their occupations. Smithies, for instance, are figures of Hephaestus: a smithy is generally a strong, dark, silent man with a limp, betrayed by his wife, vengeful, moved by inarticulate and smoldering passions. Most figures are not, however, identified by their occupations nor by their social roles. Both their roles and their traits emerge from their place in an ancient narrative. The narration, the plot, comes first: it requires a hero, a betrayer, a lover, a messenger, a confidante. Juliet's nurse is the descendant of Phaedra's nurse and of the maids-confidante in Roman comedy. Of course the figures in Christian dramas—the pilgrim, the tempter, the savior, the innocent—are derived from the biblical stories.

Though figures become allegorical, they were, in their earliest appearances, far from being abstractions. They were fully embodied. Endowed with apparently accidental physical characterizations—Hephaestus's limp, the Nurse's warts and stoutness, the scholar's long red nose—they became vivid, experienced. But far from being individuating, these traits run true to type, even in their concreteness and specificity. These details are not of course meant to represent verisimilitude; rarely is the whole picture presented. Rather, one or two physical details are focused upon, to make a presence salient. Vividness is often taken to be a mark of the real; but it may do so because it is an intensification of the act of attention, rather than a representation of what is visualized. What captures us defines the real for us.

When Miranda is represented as the ingenue figure she is, her experiences will be given order and shaped by her figurative type. An ingenue is someone who finds the marvelous, the novel, in each experience. A confidante is some-

one whose daily experiences crystallize, shaped by the confidences of the day. She may have gone to buy fish, but what *really* happened was the sharing of confidences.

A figure is neither formed by nor owns experiences: his figurative identity shapes the significances and order of the events in his life. Figures of course become exemplary. In late literary traditions, they are used in the genre of the cautionary tale; like the saints, they present lives to be imitated. Based in fact, they are of course idealizations: that is precisely their function. Plutarch's *Lives* straddles genres: written to depict heroic characters, they were read as presenting inspirational models to be imitated, to guide lives and choices. The stories, the discoveries and reversals, the recognition that lives can be narratively and formally isomorphic set the condition for the possibility of imitation. Autobiographies of revolutionary heroes, the diaries of Che Guevara or letters from Debray, present the same type and have the same function: they are hagiography.

Individuals who regard themselves as figures watch the unfolding of their lives following the patterns of their archetypes. Rather than making their choices following their characteristic dispositions, they regard these dispositions as ordered by an ancestral type. They are Mary or Martha, Peter or Paul. Interpreting their lives by their models, they form the narratives of their lives and make their choices according to the pattern, even sometimes to the point of accentuating some of their physical characteristics, so that they dominate over others.

In contrast with the wholly external perspective on characters, the concept of a figure introduces the germ of what will become a distinction between the inner and the outer person. An individual's perspective on his model, his idealized real figure, is originally externally presented, but it becomes internalized, becomes the internal model of self-representation. Of course in earlier forms, an individual does not choose his figurative type: he is an instance of that type and must discover rather than choose his true identity. But later individuals are thought of as deciding on their figurative identity; with this shift from discovery to choice, we come to the concept of person.

Persons

Our idea of persons derives from two sources: one from the theater, the *dramatis personae* of the stage; the other has its origins in law. An actor dons masks, literally *per sonae,* that through which the sound comes, the many roles he acts. A person's roles and his place in the narrative devolve from the choices that place him in a structural system, related to others. The person thus comes to stand behind his roles, to select them and to be judged by his choices and his capacities to act out his personae in a total structure that is the unfolding of his drama.

The idea of a person is the idea of a unified center of choice and action, the unit of legal and theological responsibility. Having chosen, a person acts, and so is actionable, liable. It is in the idea of action that the legal and the theatrical sources of the concept of person come together. Only when a legal system has abandoned clan or family responsibility, and individuals are seen as

primary agents, does the class of persons coincide with the class of biological individual human beings. In principle, and often in law, they need not. The class of persons may include what would, in other contexts, be institutions or corporations. Or an individual human being may be regarded as a host of personae, each of which is a distinct and unified agent, a locus of responsibility for a range of choices and actions.

If judgment summarizes a life, as it does in the Christian drama, then that life must have a unified location. Since they choose from their natures or are chosen by their stories, neither characters nor figures need be equipped with a will, not to mention a free will. Of course they can fail to do what they intend, and can intend to do less than they could perform. But the actions of characters and figures do not emerge from the exercise of a single faculty or power: there is no need for a single source of responsibility. But once there is the idea of judgment, especially if it is eternal judgment with heaven and hell and the whole person languishing there even if it is only a crucial part that has ailed or failed, then all that is various and loosely structured in the practice of assigning responsibility to diffuse character traits must be brought together and centered in a unified system, if not actually a unity. It is then that persons are required to unify the capacity for choice with the capacities for action.

Characters can be arranged along a continuum of powers and gifts, but personhood is an all-or-none attribution. One is either legally empowered or one isn't; one is either liable or not. Degrees of excusability can be granted only after liability is accepted. The Christian theological conception of judgment is obviously rooted in a legal context, one that, in its Roman origins, did not treat every human being as a person. As neither women nor slaves could originate suits, others had to act on their behalf. But of course when women and slaves are not legal persons, they are not persons either. Whatever rights and liabilities they had were theirs by virtue of their being sentient or by virtue of being members of a family. In fusing the legal and dramatic concepts of person, Christianity made every human being with a will qualify as a person, in order to make them all equally qualified to receive divine judgment. With this introduction of a conception of unitary and equal persons, Christianity at one stroke changed both the rule of law and the idea of persons.

Interest in the dispositional traits of characters is primarily social and practical; it is concerned with the allocation of responsibilities. Interest in persons is moral and legal, arising from problems in locating liability. This shift in the conception of agency carries a shift in the focal interest of moral education. In the eyes of God, persons are all alike; there is one ideal type by which all are judged. Of course any complex society must have a variety of roles to be filled: there must be the lives of the bakers and diggers, as well as that of the king. Their virtues and defects in these occupations, like their virtues and defects as sons and husbands, turn out to be incidental to their following the moral law. It is the formation of intention rather than the habits of action that are crucial to the moral education of a person. This separation marks the beginning of the separation of morality from practical life, duty from prudence. When the obligations entailed by social roles are distinct from moral obligations, a person's moral essence becomes completely internal and private.

No longer is the internal model derived from the external type: the external type becomes judged by the internal motive.

Personal integrity or disintegration will of course be manifest in the tonality of actions and habits; nevertheless, it is the intention, the capacity for choice rather than the total configuration of traits that defines the person. Here the stage is set for identity crises, for wondering who one *really* is, behind the multifold variety of actions and roles. And the search for that core person is not a matter of curiosity: it is a search for the principles by which choices are to be made.

When the paradigms of persons are actors who choose their roles, a person is a player and worldliness consists of his ability to enact, with grace and aplomb, a great variety of roles. But when the paradigms for persons come from law rather than the theater, ownership becomes the mask of worldliness. The measure and scope of a person, his powers, lie in his ability to transform the lives of those around him. Initially, the powers of persons lay in their rights to sacred and ritual agency; these were tantamount to their political rights as well. But when property determines the right and power of agency and choice, persons become transformed into selves.

The two strands that were fused in the concept of person diverge again: when we focus on persons as sources of decisions, the ultimate locus of responsibility, the unity of thought and action, we come to think of them as souls and minds. When we think of them as possessors of rights and powers, we come to think of them as selves. It is not until each of these has been transformed into the concept of individuality that the two strands are woven together again.

Soul and Mind

Because persons are primarily agents of principle, their integrity requires freedom; because they are judged liable, their powers must be autonomous. But when this criterion for personhood is carried to its logical extreme, the scope of agency moves inward, away from social dramas, to the choices of the soul, or to the operations of the mind. What, after all, is it that is ultimately responsible, but only the will? It is the will that chooses motives, that accepts or rejects desires, principles. To the extent that such activities of the soul or the mind must remain autonomous, unconditioned, free, they are in principle indifferent not only to social class but to physical presence. To find the primary, uncaused cause of action—where that action is to be judged eternally liable—is to look for a simplicity and unity that is its own agency. The shadow of disembodiment that was implicit in the idea of a legal person moves forward, stands stage center: we have a person who is a pure *res cogitans* (or, in the religious versions, one that can survive death).

And it is here, of course, that the mind/body problems loom large, and that problems of individuation are seen as presenting moral and theological difficulties. For the theory of character, there is no expectation of individuation, no need for it. Nor did legal and dramatic persons need to be unique. But souls that are equal in the eyes of God, souls that can be disembodied, souls whose social history is detachable from their nature, have serious prob-

lems about choice. Without individual histories, they nevertheless condemn or save themselves. From character as structured dispositions, we come to soul as pure agency, unfathomable, inexpressible.

The Enlightenment version of this view gladly accepted the consequence of minimal individuation. It was an elegant way of assuring universality of rational discourse, even though the investigation began with a private act of introspective, reflective meditation. Mind became the clearest best self: the touchstone to the real, its reflections, the strongest certainties.

Selves

A person's place in society determines the range of his property and his rights in disposing of it; his status is determined not by his capacity to appropriate roles but by the roles that are considered appropriate to him. When a society has changed so that individuals acquire their rights by virtue of their powers, rather than having their powers defined by their rights, the concept of person has been transformed to a concept of self. At first, the primary real possession is that of land, and a person of substance is one of the landed gentry. But when a man's industry determines whether he is landed, the story of men's lives are told by their achievements rather than by their descent. The story of fulfilled ambition is shaped by an individual's capacity to amass goods, by the extent of his properties. The quality of an individual self is determined by his qualities: they are his capital, to invest well or foolishly.

Once an individual's properties and qualities are his possessions, rather than his essence, the problem of alienation can arise. The crises of personal identity center on the discovery of principles that essentially guide choices; the crises of self-identity center on the alienation of properties. Judgments of persons are moral; judgments of souls are theological; judgments of selves are economic and political. Societies of persons are constructed to assure the rights of choice and action; they emerge from a contract of agents; societies of selves are also formed to protect and guarantee the rights of their members. But when the members of a society achieve their rights by virtue of their possessions, the protection of rights requires the protection of property, even though in principle everyone is equally entitled to the fruits of his labors and protection under law.

Jane Austen describes a world of persons on the verge of becoming a world of selves. Her favored characters have a finely attuned sense of propriety, of their proper place. There are of course coarse and vulgar gentry; but an elevated sense of propriety, a sense of the niceties of what is due to each person arises initially from property. To be sure some people of great refinement live in genteel poverty. This marks the transition. Such people are the real gentry: gentry has become gentility. Delicate sensibility is allied with good sense in the avoidance of pretense. In the novel of sensibility we have the seeds of the novel of insight and consciousness; its full growth requires the conception of individuality.

The world that Trollope describes is one that has become a world of selves, many of whom are nostalgic for the world of persons. The property required for stature is no longer land, but an assured income. Rights and the

ground of rights become transformed into obligations: an individual is entitled to what is owed to him. Individuals who claim obligations by virtue of their station, rather than by virtue of their qualities appear inflated and hollow; the old order is presented as comic.

The concerns of selves are their interests; their obligations are the duties with which they are taxed or charged. The grammar and the semantics of selfhood reveal the possessive forms. Whatever will come to be regarded as crucial property, or the means to it, will be regarded as the focus of rights; the alienation of property becomes an attack on the integrity if not actually the preservation of the self.

Metaphysical and epistemological analyses of the self make the conscious possession of experiences the final criterion of identity. The continuity of the self is established by memory; disputes about the validity of memory reports will hang on whether the claimant *had* as *hers,* the original experience. Puzzles about identity will be described as puzzles about whether it is possible to transfer or to alienate memory (that is, the retention of one's own experience) without destroying the self. In pathological terms, it is alienists who are charged with the therapy of those who suffer the loss of their identities because they have misplaced or lost their ultimate possession: their memories, whose just assessment is a guide to appropriate responses to experiences.

Societies of selves are liable to rapid social and economic change; they are expansive with the ideology if not the actuality of mobility. Although selves become ranked in a hierarchical order by their power and success, the older conception of the equality of persons remains latently present in the notion that everyone is equally entitled to make the most of himself. The conflict that is latent in this view, between the equal rights of persons and the unequal distribution of property (and therefore, in practice, of rights as well) by achieving selves, becomes more manifest as an expanding society tends to polarize goods, even while improving the general condition.

Metaphysically and epistemologically, the concept of the self also comes into stress. There is difficulty in describing the core possessor, the owner of experiences who is not herself any set of them. One can speak of characters as sets of traits without looking for a center; but it is more difficult to think of bundles of properties without an owner, especially when the older idea of the person as an agent and decision-maker is still implicit. It is presumed that the self as an owner is also endowed with capacities to choose and to act. It is in the search for a concept that will fuse the notion of inalienable properties and principles of rational choice that the concept of self is transformed into the concept of an individual.

Individuals

From the tensions in the definition of the alienable properties of selves, and from the corruptions in societies of selves—the divergence of practice from ideological commitments—comes the invention of individuality. It begins with conscience and ends with consciousness.

Unlike characters and figures, individuals actively resist typing: they rep-

resent the universal mind of rational beings, or the unique private voice. Individuals are indivisible entities: initially, they are defined against existing and presumably corrupt societies. Invented as a preserve of integrity, an autonomous *ens,* an individual transcends and resists what is binding and oppressive in society and does so from an original natural position. Although in its inception, individuality revives the idea of person, the rights of persons are formulated *in* society, while the rights of individuals are demanded *of* society. The contrast between the inner and outer person becomes the contrast between the individual and the social mask, between nature and culture.

A society of individuals is quite different from one composed of selves. Individuals contract to assure the basic rights to the development of moral and intellectual gifts, as well as legal protection of self and property. Because a society of individuals is composed of indivisible autonomous units, from whose natures—their minds and conscience—come the principles of justice, their rights are not property; they cannot be exchanged, bartered. Their rights and their qualities are their very essence, inalienable. Society's attempt to assure the development of persons comes to be seen as a possible source of corruption as well. Rousseau describes the dangerous duality of the powers of society: in the dialectic between individuality and community, there is the difficult balance between fulfillment and invasion. Society is at once the benefit and the misery of individuals who remain rudely unformed in nature, but become denaturalized in highly developed society. Rousseauean individuals implicitly give society far more power than the minimal contractual base granted by a Hobbesian person, because they add the right to the pursuit of happiness to the political rights of the protection of life and property.

There were, of course, earlier reforming theories: the moral authority that Luther located in an individual's relation to God only later came to rest in natural law. But that reformer's stance, the clear eye of the autonomy of conscience, universalizes at the same time that it forms an entity. Initially, there was no opposition between the individual and the universal: indeed the individual was the universal's ally against the social. It was through the individual that the universal could be voiced. Individuality, in that sense, has nothing to do with individuation and everything to do with integrity. Here we have the accounts of individuality given to us by Luther and Kant.

But once political and cultural reforms are effected, and the opposition between natural right and social malformation is blurred, once the society composed of autonomous individuals is formed, the individual can no longer define himself *against* a society that purports to be ruled by his voice, each legislating for all. What was only implicit in the idea of autonomy and self-formulation becomes dominant, and the quest for uniqueness begins its way toward frenzy. Initially, one's rightful and natural place is the particular stance one has on the world, the way in which social and historical forces exemplify themselves through the pinpoint of consciousness that is one's perspective, one's own vision. It is then that being an individual requires having a room of one's own, not because it is one's possession, but because only there, in solitude, away from the pressure of others, can one develop the features and styles

that differentiate one's own being from others. Integrity comes to be associated with difference; this idea, always implicit in individuality, of preserving one's right against the encroachment of others within one's own society, emerges as dominant. From having been the source of moral insight, the individual shifts to being the self-reliant pioneer, an isolated being hewing out his place in the world, forming the perspective that is an individual's vision of the world. Conscientious consciousness is then the transparent eye that illuminates the substance of social life.

Insight, which was always the primary agency of individuality, becomes clarity of sight: we have Henry James and Virginia Woolf. At first the passion for clarity dominates, and the eye's self-forming action is so wholly absorbed in what it sees that it is all but unaware of seeing. But the pressure of differentiation in consciousness leads to that reflection on inwardness that leads the individual to a unique mode of sensibility. What is seen drops out and the passion for being the seer, eventually the passion for being *this* seer takes over. But when we have a sensibility in quest of a rightful definition, a character whose scope of action is simply to establish the uniqueness of its own perception, when the point of consciousness becomes a light rather than a power, then action is no longer agency, and the order of perceptions becomes arbitrary. From James, we move to Sartre, and from Woolf to Beckett. There is nothing to be alienated; everything could have been otherwise—and remained the same. Such wholly unique individuals become obsessed with the horrors of choice: they come to see themselves as the inventors of their own principles, inventors without purpose, direction, or form. Because they are defined by their freedom, they no longer choose from their natures but choose their identities. But since such choice is itself ungrounded, they are simply the act of choosing; their attempt to submerge themselves in their choices is a necessary act of bad faith.

The rugged indomitable survivors of hardships, the upright representative of social equality against the viciousness of social selves, the members of the Kingdom of Ends, Daniel Boone and Thoreau, figures of moral endurance, have become Molloy and Malone, monologues describing the wintry ending, the fading of the northern light.

The comic and grotesque forms establish the right to uniqueness down to the swirl of the last flourish of a thumbprint. This is the antithesis of figure: the zaniness of an individual soldier in the midst of an insane war: Yossarian in the army or Lucky Jim in academia. The body returns, insistent in its demands, language goes mad.

The comic forms, stretching as always they do toward sanity, cannot reach far enough. In the swirl of achieving individuality, the styles of speech flow loose, fall apart. Experiments with modes of type on a printed page are the representations of differentiated character. At its best, the insanity leads to Universal History again, and the voices of *Finnegans Wake,* each with its own pattern of breathing, blend into history. But it is a history whose forms are so large in scope, aeons and mountain ranges just nearby specks, that the mind swirls and dies of richness just as surely as it did of wintry cold.

Subjects

The tensions within selves and the dissolution of the individual reveals the subject as a field of conflict that distinguishes itself from all of its experiences, without being able to identify itself with anything. Sartre charts the paradoxes of consciousness as that which can only be aware of itself as having this-or-that content, indeed as being nothing else save the content before it, but that is nevertheless distinct from each of its experiences: "Consciousness is what it is not; and is not what it is."

The elusive "I" that constitutes itself by authentically acknowledging the arbitrariness of the experiences that form what identity it has is nevertheless also necessarily caught in bad faith: for even in attempting to identify itself with the pure act of reflection on its own emptiness, it implicitly attempts to reify itself as the act of reflection. When the "I" is not an object of experience, it is not an entity either. The next move is to recognize that the no-thing is nothing; and the move after that is to acknowledge "it" as Nothing attempting to objectify itself. If this sounds perilously like nonsense, that is, Sartre argues, because it is precisely that: non-sense, the absurd without sense. But that is how non-things are.

Consciousness as no-thing is pure act, pure freedom. Because it is unconditioned by its history or circumstances, it freely chooses or rejects its identity. This does not, of course, mean that a thirty-year-old, 300-pound Japanese weight-lifter can choose to *become* a seven-year-old Balinese dancer. The freedom of the subject as consciousness is not the freedom to determine the *en soi,* the fixed character of things that are objectively what they are. Nor is it the freedom of the will: for that is yet another reification. It is the freedom of choice, the freedom of the *pour soi* as nothing save the activity of reflection. In being free to consider himself as different from every detail of his body and history, the 300-pound Japanese weight-lifter is free to identify himself with the seven-year-old Balinese dancer. To be sure, such an identification is psychologically, as well as materially, an act of bad faith: not only is he not a Balinese dancer, but he cannot have the consciousness of a Balinese dancer. But then the decision to identify himself simply and solely as a Japanese weight-lifter is also an act of bad faith. He is the act of refusing or accepting this-or-that identity. But since he is also a Japanese weight-lifter, he would be in bad faith were he to claim he is nothing but his freedom.

The pure act of choice—the act that had been the person's selection of a role-mask, the self's control of property, the individual's political liberties—has become the act of self-definition. But persons are no longer identified by what is chosen—for that is utterly arbitrary—but by the unconditioned act of choosing. Yet since there is no correct way to choose—since neither history, nor physical constitution, nor utilitarian calculation, nor morality can guide choice—freedom and arbitrariness are mutually implied. When persons are self-creating novelists inventing the fictions of their identities, everything in their lives depends on their choices, because they are nothing else but those choices, even though it makes no difference what they choose. There is no

salvation and no damnation, no moral fiendishness and no moral heroism. We choose—we must choose—our indignation and outrage: they define us.

Presences

And all along this while there has been The Russian Novel. Novels of a person tell a tale of development, of discovered responsibility, fulfilled or failed. A person's life has a form: it is continuous and unified. Myshkin or Alyosha are not persons: they are presences, the return of the unchartable soul. A Myshkin does not possess his experiences; but he does not choose his principles either. The details of their lives, the content of their experiences could have been quite different, and yet Myshkin or Alyosha would have been the same. They are a mode of attending, being present to their experiences, without dominating or controlling them. This is the antithesis of Sartrean consciousness-as-non-being-trying-to-objectify-itself. It is precisely the absence of willfulness, or choice of roles, of grace or enactment, swirl of action, that makes an Alyosha present, with immense gravity and density, to his experiences. We can try to give character sketches of them, but we must fail; we can try to project their lives into the future, but they are presences to whom anything can happen. Transparent to their experiences, never holding themselves back, their lives are nevertheless not revealed on any surface. Their powers are always magnetic, always at service, but never centered. Though they are questers, there is nothing incomplete about them. Though others respond strongly to the quality of their presence, to something of the mood they induce, they are not agents. One rarely knows their occupations; whatever it is, it doesn't form them. Their psychological and physical characteristics are incidental to them. Though generally tortured, they are innocent and invulnerable though they may commit crimes of unspeakable horror. The figure of such presences is the Christian, the holy innocent.

Understanding other conceptions of persons puts one on the way of being them; but understanding presences—if indeed there is understanding of them to be had—does not put one any closer to being one. It cannot be achieved by imitation, willing, practice, or a good education. It is a mode of identity invented precisely to go beyond achievement and willfulness. Dostoyevsky paradigmatically, but occasionally Hardy, and (usually unsuccessfully) Lawrence present presences as endowments of grace received beyond striving.

And What Is Left?

What, one might well ask, is the point of this fast trip through history with a slanted *camera obscura,* catching persons in transforming attitudes? The distinctions that I have drawn are forced; most philosophers and novelists blend the notions that I have distinguished. One would hardly find a pure case: Locke tries to fuse the concept of self with that of individual; Kant borrows from everywhere. And of course as the inheritance becomes more complex, it becomes more difficult to separate the various layers, even in a purely analytic way. All of the concepts of identity that I have so briefly sketched remain as undercurrents in our lives, provide the norms by which we judge ourselves and others. Implicitly, they form our conceptions of the principles that ought to

guide our choices. Our philosophical intuitions—the intuitions that guide our analyses of criteria for personal identity—have been formed by all these notions: they are the archeological layers on which our practices rest. As is obvious, they are latently in conflict; if we try to be all of them, conceiving of each as having the final obligation over us, we shall indeed be torn.

And society imposes conflicting roles on us as well. We are provided with paradigmatic figures, and at the same time exhorted to be individuals, as if these were in fact easily reconcilable; we intend to become unified persons and also achieved selves, as if these were easily harmonized. And our literature is a hodgepodge of nostalgia as well: much science fiction is an attempt to revive the early idea of individuality, to see figures of stature, half-earthlings of the future, to present a vivid ingenuity that will magically return to us our heroic Promethean selves. We have the nostalgia for Soul, and the depiction of figural identities and ironies of figural identities.

We have our sentimental returns to each of these views as well as our strategies of irony against each. Our literary moves play them off against one another in elaborate shifting patterns. Internally, we play ourselves off against one another in these patterns, sensing ourselves torn because we believe persons ought to be unified.

The concept of *person* now emerges as dominant in philosophic analysis and in social life—with the concept of individuality receding—precisely because these aspects of our history are in conflict, and because when we are torn, we cast about for that concept of identity that shores and anchors principles of choice. And it has always been the concept of a person that has unified action, that was concerned with choice.

Philosophers would very properly ask whether there is not, in all these various strands of agency and identity that I have so crudely sketched, one underlying notion, one that makes the transformation be the transformation of *one* concept? After all, it might be said that this is a history of the concept of person, with implicit guidelines for inclusion and exclusion. We have left out toads and toadstools, have followed the main pull of *a* history.

In a full treatment of this history, we would have discussed the links that connect one moment in the history to another, and have shown how the remnants of the earlier views remain latently present in later versions, sometimes in disguise and sometimes as providing tensed balances to a dominant theme. The important and interesting point is that the details of the transition and of the functions of the archeological traces are always different. Sometimes it is the development of an implicit contradiction that forwards the story, from self to individual; sometimes it is the force of political circumstance, the invasion of a foreign power; sometimes it is the wild invention of a novel, growing its hairshirt in private, caught and carried. There are indeed connecting links. But they are not an underlying substance. The connective and recessive tissue always have their own characters. It is always possible to distinguish the nostalgia for a form from its first appearance, the sentimental from the naive; but the distinction is not always drawn in the same place.

Perhaps one might look for a mock-Hegelian form that characterized all these shifts, the pattern of a dialectic. But Hegel knew that such a form is a

mere abstraction; properly speaking the concept is not the form of the dialectic but its whole history, no more, no less. So indeed, there is sense to the objection: there is a concept of a person—there is our present concept of persons, and this (better and more fully told) is its history. So understanding "the" concept of a person is understanding history, just as understanding any particular individual is understanding *his* history.

If the objection demands that we provide an account of the internal unity of this history, of the preoccupations that any theory of persons must satisfy, an account of why the concept changed in the way it did, then it is indeed to the *regional* concept of a person that we turn. The concept of a person was, after all, invented to do just that: when we look for a *unity* of roles, or a single source of change, it is the concept of a person we want. But it would be a mistake to suppose that having analyzed the concept of *person,* we have uncovered the concept from which the others—character, self, individual—could in any sense be derived or unfolded. We have found the concept in that area which required a construction, a location for the unity of principles of choice and the principles of action. Naturally enough, if we try to fuse this concept with those that were constructed to provide continuity of genetic lineage, or to give an account of the patterning of character traits, we shall find just the sorts of puzzles that crop up whenever we have cross-classifications. This should cause no surprise; what *is* puzzling is that it should be supposed that conceptual analysis could, by itself, restructure and reform these notions so that we could simply discover the "logical" relations among these concepts.

We should use the concept of a person just where it belongs, the area for locating the unity of choice, realizing that we have other preoccupations besides the unification of consciousness in memory or in the principles of choice. For instance, we might do well to focus on the analysis of the development of character traits, to inquire into the ways various traits support different conceptions of responsibility. In doing that, we move away from the agonies of self-definition, of strong personal identification, and turn to thinking about the sorts of traits of imagination and sociability that might be socially and politically beneficial. For this we would do well to concentrate less on persons and more on characters.

The theory of character has other important uses for us. Of all the concepts of persons, it is the one in which psychological and physiological traits are most closely linked. It is around the primacy of psychological and physiological continuity as criteria for personal identity that many controversies center. But more significantly, the outrageously skimpy and forced history of the concept of person that I have sketched is willful and incomplete because in the rush of telling the story, I have disconnected the concept of person from the concept of a human being, a certain sort of organism, not all of whose motives and needs are defined by its conception of itself. Though the concept of a person is, in the larger sense, given by its history, it nevertheless is also closely interwoven with a nonhistorical concept, one that gives it its natural and biological base. The theory of character is a natural context for the investigation of the connection between the biological base of the concept of persons and its historical transformations.

The issue of whether the class of persons exactly coincides with the class of biologically defined human beings—whether corporations, Venusians, mongolian idiots, and fetuses are persons—is in part a conceptual question. It is a question about whether the relevant base for the classification of persons requires attention to whether things look like "us," whether they are made out of stuff like "ours," or whether it is enough that they function as we take "ourselves" to function. If Venusians and robots come to be thought of as persons, at least part of the argument that will establish them will be that they function as we do: that while they are not the *same* organisms that we are, they are in the appropriate sense the same *type* of organism or entity. Does an entity have to be an organism to be a person? When is a well-organized, self-sustaining entity an organism?

Of course there may be a time when Venusians and robots are called persons by science fiction writers and philosophers and by no one else. The question of the personhood of Venusians and robots becomes serious when we actually start raising questions about their legal rights and obligations. It is a very complex matter: if Venusians and robots come increasingly to be treated as persons are now treated, their inclusion in the class will come to modify our conceptions and treatment of human organisms. Treating ourselves as of the same type as Venusians will gradually and subtly come to affect leading questions and presuppositions about the nature of an organism. But there is no point speculating about what we shall say in transitional periods, and certainly none in legislating in advance what we shall decide. Whether we shall, when the time comes, classify Venusians as persons will certainly depend on what they are like, on whether we like them, and on our political and social preoccupations when the issue becomes a live one.

Humans are just the sorts of organisms that interpret and modify their agency through their conceptions of themselves. This is a complicated biological fact about us. Whether there are other sorts of entities that do this is in part but not wholly an empirical question. The fullest analysis of the concept of person would investigate the biologically adaptive functions of various cultural grafts: the obsessions with unification and choice, salvation and simplicity, isolated integrity and achievement. From this larger perspective, we might be able to see how the cultural history of the various versions of the concept of a person has been modified by and has in turn modified its biological base.

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Franco Moretti

From The Way of the World: The *Bildungsroman* in European Culture

Nothing I had, and yet profusion:
The lust for truth, the pleasure in illusion.
Give back the passions unabated,
That deepest joy, alive with pain,
Love's power and the strength of hatred,
Give back my youth to me again.

Goethe, *Faust*

Achilles, Hector, Ulysses: the hero of the classical epic is a mature man, an adult. Aeneas, carrying away a father by now too old, and a son still too young, is the perfect embodiment of the symbolic relevance of the "middle" stage of life. This paradigm will last a long time ("*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita* . . . "), but with the first enigmatic hero of modern times, it falls apart. According to the text, Hamlet is thirty years old: far from young by Renaissance standards. But *our* culture, in choosing Hamlet as its first symbolic hero, has "forgotten" his age, or rather has had to alter it, and picture the Prince of Denmark as a young man.

The decisive thrust in this sense was made by Goethe; and it takes shape, symptomatically, precisely in the work that codifies the new paradigm and sees *youth* as the most meaningful part of life: *Wilhelm Meister.* This novel marks simultaneously the birth of the *Bildungsroman* (the form which will dominate or, more precisely, make possible the Golden Century of Western narrative),[1] and of a new hero: Wilhelm Meister, followed by Elizabeth Bennet and Julien Sorel, Rastignac and Frédéric Moreau and Bel-Ami, Waverley and David Copperfield, Renzo Tramaglino, Eugene Onegin, Bazarov, Dorothea Brooke . . .

Youth is both a necessary and sufficient definition of these heroes. Aeschylus's Orestes was also young, but his youth was incidental and subordinate to other much more meaningful characteristics—such as being the son of Agamemnon, for instance. But at the end of the eighteenth century the priorities are reversed, and what makes Wilhelm Meister and his successors representative and interesting is, to a large extent, youth as such. Youth, or rather the European novel's numerous versions of youth, becomes for our modern culture the age which holds the "meaning of life": it is the first gift Mephisto

offers Faust. In this study I hope to illuminate the causes, features and consequences of this symbolic shift.

I

In "stable communities," that is in status or "traditional" societies, writes Karl Mannheim, "'Being Young' is a question of biological differentiation."[2] Here, to be young simply means not yet being an adult. Each individual's youth faithfully repeats that of his forebears, introducing him to a role that lives on unchanged: it is a "pre-scribed" youth, which, to quote Mannheim again, knows no "entelechy." It has no culture that distinguishes it and emphasizes its worth. It is, we might say, an "invisible" and "insignificant" youth.

But when status society starts to collapse, the countryside is abandoned for the city, and the world of work changes at an incredible and incessant pace, the colorless and uneventful socialization of "old" youth becomes increasingly implausible: it becomes a *problem,* one that makes youth itself problematic. Already in Meister's case, "apprenticeship" is no longer the slow and predictable progress toward one's father's work, but rather an uncertain exploration of social space, which the nineteenth century—through travel and adventure, wandering and getting lost, "Bohême" and "parvenir"—will underline countless times. It is a necessary exploration: in dismantling the continuity between generations, as is well known, the new and destabilizing forces of capitalism impose a hitherto unknown *mobility.* But it is also a yearned for exploration, since the selfsame process gives rise to unexpected hopes, thereby generating an *interiority* not only fuller than before, but also—as Hegel clearly saw, even though he deplored it—perennially dissatisfied and restless.

Mobility and interiority. Modern youth, to be sure, is many other things as well: the growing influence of education, the strengthening of bonds within generations, a new relationship with nature, youth's "spiritualization"—these features are just as important in its "real" development. Yet the *Bildungsroman* discards them as irrelevant, abstracting from "real" youth a "symbolic" one, epitomized, we have said, in mobility and interiority.[3] Why this choice?

Because, I think, at the turn of the eighteenth century much more than just a rethinking of youth was at stake. Virtually without notice, in the dreams and nightmares of the so-called double revolution, Europe plunges into modernity, but without possessing a *culture* of modernity. If youth, therefore, achieves its symbolic centrality, and the "great narrative" of the *Bildungsroman* comes into being, this is because Europe has to attach a meaning, not so much to youth, as to *modernity.*

The *Bildungsroman* as the "symbolic form" of modernity: for Cassirer, and Panofsky, through such a form "a particular spiritual content [here, a specific image of modernity] is connected to a specific material sign [here, youth] and intimately identified with it."[4] "A specific image of modernity": the image conveyed precisely by the "youthful" attributes of mobility and inner restlessness. Modernity as a bewitching and risky process full of "great expectations" and "lost illusions." Modernity as—in Marx's words—a "permanent revolution" that perceives the experience piled up in tradition as a useless dead-weight, and therefore can no longer feel represented by maturity, and still less by old age.

In this first respect youth is "chosen" as the new epoch's "specific material sign," and it is chosen over the multitude of other possible signs, because of its ability to *accentuate* modernity's dynamism and instability.[5] Youth is, so to speak, modernity's "essence," the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past. And, to be sure, it was impossible to cope with the times without acknowledging their revolutionary impetus: a symbolic form incapable of doing so would have been perfectly *useless.* But if it had been able to do *only this,* on the other hand, it would have run the risk of *destroying itself as form*—precisely what happened, according to a long-standing critical tradition, to Goethe's other great attempt at representing modernity: *Faust.* If, in other words, inner dissatisfaction and mobility make novelistic youth "symbolic" of modernity, they also force it to share in the "formlessness" of the new epoch, in its protean elusiveness. To become a "form," youth must be endowed with a very different, almost opposite feature to those already mentioned: the very simple and slightly philistine notion that youth "does not last forever." Youth is brief, or at any rate circumscribed, and this enables, or rather *forces* the a priori establishment of a formal constraint on the portrayal of modernity. Only by curbing its intrinsically boundless dynamism, only by agreeing to betray to a certain extent its very essence, only thus, it seems, can modernity be *represented.* Only thus, we may add, can it be "made human"; can it become an integral part of our emotional and intellectual system, instead of the hostile force bombarding it from without with that "excess of stimuli" which—from Simmel to Freud to Benjamin—has always been seen as modernity's most typical threat.[6]

And yet—dynamism and limits, restlessness and the "sense of an ending": built as it is on such sharp contrasts, the structure of the *Bildungsroman* will of necessity be *intrinsically contradictory.* A fact which poses extremely interesting problems for aesthetics—the novel as the form "most open to dangers" of the young Lukács—and even more interesting ones for the history of culture. But before discussing these, let us try to retrace the internal logic of this formal contradiction.

II

"Youth does not last forever." What constitutes it as symbolic form is no longer a "spatial" determination, as in the case of Renaissance perspective, but rather a *temporal* one. This is not surprising, since the nineteenth century, under the pressure of modernity, had first of all to reorganize its conception of *change*—which too often, from the time of the French Revolution, had appeared as a meaningless and thus threatening reality ("Je n'y comprends rien," wrote De Maistre in 1796, "c'est le grand mot du jour"). This accounts for the centrality of *history* in nineteenth-century culture and, with Darwin, science as well; and for the centrality of *narrative* within the domain of literature. Narrative and history, in fact, do not retreat before the onslaught of events, but demonstrate the possibility of giving them order and meaning. Furthermore, they suggest that reality's meaning is now to be grasped solely in its historico-diachronic dimension. Not only are there no "meaningless" events; there can now be meaning only *through* events.

Thus, although there exist countless differences (starting with "stylistic" ones) among the various kinds of *Bildungsroman,* I shall organize this study around *plot differences:* the most pertinent, in my opinion, for capturing the rhetorical and ideological essence of a historico-narrative culture. Plot differences or, more exactly, differences in the ways in which plot generates meaning. Following basically Lotman's conceptualization, we can express this difference as a variation in the weight of two principles of textual organization: the "classification" principle and the "transformation" principle. While both are always present in a narrative work, these two principles usually carry an uneven weight, and are actually inversely proportional: as we shall see, the prevalence of one rhetorical strategy over the other, especially in an extreme form, implies very different value choices and even opposite attitudes to modernity.

When classification is strongest—as in the English "family romance" and in the classical *Bildungsroman*—narrative transformations have meaning insofar as they lead to a particularly marked ending: one that establishes a classification different from the initial one but nonetheless perfectly clear and stable—definitive, in both senses this term has in English. This teleological rhetoric—the meaning of events lies in their *finality*—is the narrative equivalent of Hegelian thought, with which it shares a strong *normative* vocation: events acquire meaning when they led to *one* ending, and one only.

Under the classification principle, in other words, a story is more meaningful the more truly it manages to *suppress itself as story.* Under the transformation principle—as in the trend represented by Stendhal and Pushkin, or in that from Balzac to Flaubert—the opposite is true: what makes a story meaningful is its narrativity, its being an open-ended process. Meaning is the result not of a fulfilled teleology, but rather, as for Darwin, of the total rejection of such a solution. The ending, the privileged narrative moment of taxonomic mentality, becomes the most *meaningless* one here: *Onegin*'s destroyed last chapter, Stendhal's insolently arbitrary closures, or the *Comêdie Humaine*'s perennially postponed endings are instances of a narrative logic according to which a story's meaning resides precisely in the impossibility of "fixing" it.

The oppositions between the two models can obviously go on ad infinitum. Thus, on the side of classification we have the novel of marriage, seen as the definitive and classifying act par excellence: at the end of the *Bildungsroman*'s development, marriage will even be disembodied into an abstract principle by Eliot's Daniel Deronda who marries not so much a woman, as a rigidly normative culture. On the side of transformations, we have the novel of adultery: a relationship inconceivable within the Anglo-Germanic traditions (where it is either totally absent, or appears as the sinister and merely destructive force of *Elective Affinities* or *Wuthering Heights*), it becomes here, by contrast, the natural habitat of an existence devoted to instability. And in the end adultery too becomes a disembodied abstraction with Flaubert's Frédéric Moreau who, in perfect parallelism with Daniel Deronda, no longer commits adultery with a woman, but with the immaterial principle of indetermination.

An equally sharp contrast appears when we view these differing narrative rhetorics in terms of the history of ideas. Here, the classical *Bildungsroman* plot posits "happiness" as the highest value, but only to the detriment and

eventual annulment of "freedom"—while Stendhal, for his part, follows just as radically the opposite course. Similarly, Balzac's fascination with mobility and metamorphoses ends up dismantling the very notion of personal identity—whereas in England, the centrality of the latter value generates an equally inevitable repugnance to change.

Moreover, it is clear that the two models express opposite attitudes toward modernity: caged and exorcised by the principle of classification, it is exasperated and made hypnotic by that of transformation. And it is especially clear that the full development of the antithesis implies a split in the image of youth itself. Where the classification principle prevails—where it is emphasized, as in Goethe and in the English novelists, that youth "must come to an end"—youth is subordinated to the idea of "maturity": like the story, it has meaning only *insofar as* it leads to a stable and "final" identity. Where the transformation principle prevails and youthful dynamism is emphasized, as in the French novelists, youth cannot or does not want to give way to maturity: the young hero senses in fact in such a "conclusion" a sort of betrayal, which would *deprive* his youth of its meaning rather than enrich it.

Maturity and youth are therefore inversely proportional: the culture that emphasizes the first devalues the second, and vice versa. At the opposite poles of this split lie Eliot's *Felix Holt* and *Daniel Deronda,* and Flaubert's *Sentimental Education.* In Eliot's novels, the hero is so mature from the very start as to dissociate himself suspiciously from anything connected with youthful restlessness: the "sense of an ending" has suffocated any appeal youth may have had. In Flaubert, on the other hand, Frédéric Moreau is so mesmerized by the potentialities inherent in his youth that he abhors any determination as an intolerable loss of meaning: his prophetic and narcissistic youth, which would like to go on without end, will abolish maturity and collapse overnight into a benumbed old age.

With perfect symmetry, the excessive development of one principle eliminates the opposite one: but in so doing, *it is the Bildungsroman itself that disappears*—Eliot's and Flaubert's being the last masterpieces of the genre. However paradoxical it may seem, this symbolic form could indeed exist, not despite but *by virtue of its contradictory nature.* It could exist because within it—within each single work and within the genre as a whole—*both* principles were simultaneously active, however unbalanced and uneven their strength. It could exist: better still, it *had* to exist. For the contradiction between conflicting evaluations of modernity and youth, or between opposing values and symbolic relationships, is not a flaw—or perhaps is *also* a flaw—but it is above all the paradoxical *functional principle* of a large part of modern culture. Let us recall the values mentioned above—freedom and happiness, identity and change, security and metamorphoses: although antagonistic, they are *all equally important* for modern Western mentality. Our world calls for their *coexistence,* however difficult; and it therefore also calls for a cultural mechanism capable of representing, exploring and testing that coexistence.

A particularly "strong" attempt to control this contradictory coexistence and to "make it work" is to be found, once again, in *Faust.* Here, amidst the many souls of modern culture—amidst the desire for happiness ("Stop, thou

art so beautiful . . . ") and the freedom of *streben* that "sweeps us ever onward"; amidst the irrepressible identity of the protagonist and his countless historical transformations—here Goethe suggests the possibility of an all-embracing *synthesis.* Yet this synthesis has never managed to dispel our doubts—the doubt that Gretchen's tragedy, and that of Philemon and Baucis, can never be erased; that the bet has been lost; that Faust's salvation is a sham: that synthesis, in other words, is an ideal no longer attainable. And so, in the same decades as *Faust,* the enormous and unconscious collective enterprise of the *Bildungsroman* bears witness to a different solution to modern culture's contradictory nature. Far less ambitious than synthesis, this other solution is *compromise:* which is also, not surprisingly, the novel's most celebrated theme.

An extraordinary symbolic stalemate thereby develops, in which Goethe does not cancel Stendhal, nor Balzac Dickens, nor Flaubert Eliot. Each culture and each individual will have their preferences, as is obvious: but they will never be considered *exclusive.* In this purgatorial world we do not find—to refer to Lukács's early essay on Kierkegaard—the tragic logic of the "either/or," but rather the more compromising one of the "as well as." And in all likelihood it was *precisely this predisposition to compromise* that allowed the *Bildungsroman* to emerge victorious from that veritable "struggle for existence" between various narrative forms that took place at the turn of the eighteenth century: historical novel and epistolary novel, lyric, allegorical, satirical, "romantic" novel, *Künstlerroman* . . . As in Darwin, the fate of these forms hung on their respective "purity": that is to say, the more they remained bound to a rigid, original structure, the more difficult their survival. And vice-versa: the more a form was capable of flexibility and compromise, the better it could prosper in the maelstrom without synthesis of modern history. And the most bastard of these forms became—the dominant genre of Western narrative: for the gods of modernity, unlike those of *King Lear,* do indeed stand up for bastards.

All this compels us to re-examine the current notion of "modern ideology" or "bourgeois culture," or as you like it. The success of the *Bildungsroman* suggests in fact that the truly central ideologies of our world are not in the least—contrary to widespread certainties; more widespread still, incidentally, in deconstructionist thought—intolerant, normative, monologic, to be wholly submitted to or rejected. Quite the opposite: they are pliant and precarious, "weak" and "impure." When we remember that the *Bildungsroman*—the symbolic form that more than any other has portrayed and promoted modern socialization—is also the *most contradictory* of modern symbolic forms, we realize that in our world socialization itself consists first of all in the *interiorization of contradiction.* The next step being not to "solve" the contradiction, but rather to learn to live with it, and even transform it into a tool for survival.

III

Let us begin with a question: how is it that we have Freudian interpretations of tragedy and myth, of fairy tale and comedy—yet nothing comparable for the novel? For the same reason, I believe, that we have no solid Freudian analysis of youth: because the *raison d'être* of psychoanalysis lies in *breaking up* the psyche into its opposing "forces"—whereas youth and the novel have the

opposite task of fusing, or at least bringing together, the conflicting features of individual personality. Because, in other words, psychoanalysis always looks *beyond* the Ego—whereas the *Bildungsroman* attempts to *build* the Ego, and make it the indisputable center of its own structure.[7]

The Ego's centrality is connected, of course, to the theme of socialization—this being, to a large extent, the "proper functioning" of the Ego thanks to that particularly effective compromise, the Freudian "reality principle." But this then compels us to question the *Bildungsroman*'s attitude toward an idea very embarrassing for modern culture—the idea of "normality." Once again, we may begin with a contrast. As is well known, a large part of twentieth-century thought—from Freud, let us say, to Foucault—has defined normality against *its opposite:* against pathology, emargination, repression. Normality is seen not as a meaning-ful, but rather as an unmarked entity. The self-defensive result of a "negation" process, normality's meaning is to be found *outside itself:* in what it excludes, not in what it includes.

Leaving aside the most elementary form of the *Bildungsroman* (the English tradition of the "insipid" hero—a term which is the culinary equivalent of "unmarked," and was used by Richardson for *Tom Jones* and by Scott for *Waverley,* and which also applies to *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield*), it is quite clear that the novel has followed a strategy opposed to the one we have described. It has accustomed us to looking at normality *from within* rather than from the stance of its exceptions; and it has produced a phenomenology that makes normality interesting and meaningful *as* normality. If the *Bildungsroman*'s initial option is always explicitly anti-heroic and prosaic—the hero is Wilhelm Meister, not Faust; Julien Sorel and Dorothea Brooke, not Napoleon or Saint Theresa (and so on to Flaubert, and then to Joyce)—these characters are still, though certainly all "normal" in their own ways, far from unmarked or meaningless in themselves.

An internally articulated, interesting and lively normality—normality as the expulsion of all marked features, as a true semantic void. Theoretically, the two concepts are irreconcilable: if one is true, the other is false, and vice versa. Historically, however, this opposition becomes a sort of division of labor: a division of space and time. Normality as "negation," as Foucault has shown, is the product of a double threat: the crisis of a socio-cultural order, and the violent reorganization of power. Its time is that of crisis and genesis. Its space, surrounded by peculiarly strong social institutions, is the purely negative area of the "unenclosed." Its desire is to be like everyone else and thus to go by unnoticed.

Its literary expression, we may add, is nineteenth-century mass narrative: the literature of states of exception, of extreme ills and extreme remedies. But precisely: mass narrative (which, not by chance, has received ample treatment from Freudian criticism)—not the novel. Only rarely does the novel explore the spatio-temporal confines of the given world: it usually stays "in the middle," where it discovers, or perhaps creates, the typically modern feeling and enjoyment of "everyday life" and "ordinary administration." Everyday life: an anthropocentric space where all social activities lose their exacting objectivity and converge in the domain of "personality." Ordinary administration: a time

of "lived experience" and individual growth—a time filled with "opportunities," but which excludes by definition both the crisis and genesis of a culture.[8]

Just think of the historical course of the *Bildungsroman:* it originates with Goethe and Jane Austen who, as we shall see, write as if to show that the double revolution of the eighteenth century could have been avoided. It continues with Stendhal's heroes, who are born "too late" to take part in the revolutionary-Napoleonic epic. It withers away with 1848 in Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* (the revolution that was not a revolution) and with the English thirties in Eliot's *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch* (the "Reforms" that did not keep their promises). It is a constant elusion of historical turning points and breaks: an elusion of tragedy and hence, as Lukács wrote in *Soul and Forms,* of the very idea that societies and individuals acquire their full meaning in a "moment of truth."[9]

An elusion, we may conclude, of whatever may endanger the Ego's equilibrium, making its compromises impossible—and a gravitation, in contrast, to those modes of existence that allow the Ego to manifest itself fully.[10] In this sense—and all the more so if we continue to believe that moments and occasions of truth, despite everything, do still exist—the novel must strike us as a *weak* form. This is indeed the case, and this weakness—which, of course, is ours as well—goes together with the other features we have noted: its contradictory, hybrid and compromising nature. But the point is that such features are also intrinsic to that way of existence—everyday, normal, half-unaware and decidedly unheroic—that Western culture has tried incessantly to protect and expand, and has endowed with an ever-growing significance: till it has entrusted to it what we keep calling, for lack of anything better, the "meaning of life." And as few things have helped shape this value as much as our novelistic tradition, then the novel's weakness should strike us perhaps as being far from innocent.

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Bildungsroman. A certain magnetism hovers around the term. It stands out as the most obvious of the (few) reference points available in that irregular expanse we call the "novel." It occupies a central role in the philosophical investigations of the novel, from Hegel's *Aesthetics* to Dilthey to Lukács's *Theory of the Novel.* Found in the broad historical frameworks of Mikhail Bakhtin and Erich Auerbach, it is even discernible in the models of narrative plot constructed by Yuri Lotman. It reappears under various headings ("novel of formation," "of initiation," "of education") in all of the major literary traditions. Even those novels that clearly are *not Bildungsroman* or novels of formation are perceived by us against this conceptual horizon; so we speak of a "failed initiation" or of a "problematic formation." Expressions of dubious usefulness, as are all negative definitions; nonetheless they bear witness to the hold of this image on our modes of analysis.

Such semantic hypertrophy is not accidental. Even though the concept of the *Bildungsroman* has become ever more approximate, it is still clear that we seek to indicate with it one of the most harmonious solutions ever offered to a dilemma conterminous with modern bourgeois civilization: the conflict

between the ideal of *self-determination* and the equally imperious demands of *socialization.* For two centuries now, Western societies have recognized the individual's right to choose one's own ethics and idea of "happiness," to imagine freely and construct one's personal destiny—rights declared in proclamations and set down in constitutions but that are not, as a result, universally realizable, since they obviously give rise to contrasting aspirations. And if a liberal-democratic and capitalist society is without a doubt one that can best "live with" conflict, it is equally true that, as a *system* of social and political relationships, it too tends to settle itself into an operational mode that is predictable, regular, "normal." Like all systems, it demands agreement, homogeneity, consensus.

How can the tendency toward *individuality,* which is the necessary fruit of a culture of self-determination, be made to coexist with the opposing tendency to *normality,* the offspring, equally inevitable, of the mechanism of socialization? This is the first aspect of the problem, complicated and made more fascinating still by another characteristic of our civilization, which, having always been pervaded by the doctrines of natural rights, cannot concede that socialization is based on a mere compliance with authority. It is not enough that the social order is "legal"; it must also appear *symbolically legitimate.* It must draw its inspiration from values recognized by society as fundamental, reflect them and encourage them. Or it must at least seem to do so.

Thus it is not sufficient for modern bourgeois society simply to subdue the drives that oppose the standards of "normality." It is also necessary that, as a "free individual," not as a fearful subject but as a convinced citizen, one perceives the social norms as *one's own.* One must *internalize* them and fuse external compulsion and internal impulses into a new unity until the former is no longer distinguishable from the latter. This fusion is what we usually call "consent" or "legitimation." If the *Bildungsroman* appears to us still today as an essential, pivotal point of our history, this is because it has succeeded in representing this fusion with a force of conviction and optimistic clarity that will never be equaled again. We will see in fact that here there is no conflict between individuality and socialization, autonomy and normality, interiority and objectification. One's formation as an individual in and for oneself coincides without rifts with one's social integration as a simple *part of a whole.* These are two trajectories that nourish one another and in which the painful perception of socialization as *Entsagung,* "renunciation" (from which will emerge the immense psychological and narrative problematics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) is still inconceivable. The "comfort of civilization": perhaps the *Bildungsroman*'s historical meaning can best be summarized in these words.

The classical *Bildungsroman* as the synthesis that nullifies the previous opposition of *Entwicklungsroman* (novel of "development," of the subjective unfolding of an individuality) and *Erziehungsroman* (novel of "education," of an objective process, observed from the standpoint of the educator). The classical *Bildungsroman* as a synthetic form: and yet, as I progressed in my work, I realized that this definition accounts for one aspect only of the works under examination. To use an analogy, it is as if the structure of the classical

Bildungsroman consisted of two large planes partially superimposed. The common area is the domain of synthesis: it occupies the center of the figure, but not the whole, and neither, perhaps, is it meant to. More than depicting the two opposing tensions of modern existence as coextensive and isomorphous, the synthetic vocation of the classical *Bildungsroman* presents them as complementary. In organic balance, certainly, but also—or better yet, precisely because—they are profoundly different and distant.

If the area of synthesis is then the starting-point of our analysis, the second and third sections of this chapter will be devoted to quite different phenomena. In the second I will deal with those aspects of narrative structure that emphasize individual "happiness": the space of "aesthetic" harmony, of the free and open construction of personality, of narrative *sjuzhet.* In the third section, the other side of all this: the world of social vigilance, of "organic" inequalities, of necessity, of the *fabula.*

Different values, ascribed to different areas of existence, and governed by different perceptional modes and narrative mechanisms. Different, and distributed with a masterful asymmetry: so captivating as to seem almost deceitful. Because the values and experiences that gratify our sense of individuality are always in the forefront; flaunted, bright, full, they constitute the main part of the narration: the *sjuzhet.* But there is no *sjuzhet* without a *fabula,* and even though the former may be a thousand times more fascinating, appearing to be the "dominant" aspect of the work, the latter—essential, logical, wholly self-contained—remains in any case its "determinant" element: less visible, but far more solid.

Beyond organicistic synthesis, what appears here is that indelible image of bourgeois thought—exchange. You would like such and such values to be realized?—fine, but then you must also accept these others, for without them the former cannot exist. An exchange, and one in which something is gained and something is lost. Precisely what we shall try to establish.

Notes

1. For reasons given in the first chapter, I shall use the term "classical *Bildungsroman,*" when necessary, to distinguish the narrative model created by Goethe and Austen from the *Bildungsroman* genre as a whole. "Novel of formation" or perhaps the more precise "novel of socialization" are other possible generic labels, which have not been used however to avoid unnecessary confusion.

Let me also justify, in passing, a double exclusion that would not have displeased General De Gaulle: that of the Russian novel (represented here only by authors closely linked to the Western European tradition, such as Pushkin and Turgenev), and the American novel (missing completely). As for Russia, this is due to the persistence of a marked religious dimension (be it the "politico-national" version of *War and Peace,* or Dostoevsky's ethico-metaphysical one), which attaches meaning to individual existence in ways unthinkable in the fully secularized universe of the Western European *Bildungsroman.* The same is true for American narrative, where, in addition, "nature" retains a symbolic value alien to the essentially urban thematics of the European novel; and where the hero's decisive experience, unlike in Europe, is not an encounter with the "unknown," but with an "alien"—usually an Indian or a Black.

2. Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (ed. Paul Kecskemeti), London 1952, p. 300, n. 2.

3. Especially striking has been the constant antipathy between School and the Novel: School condemns novel reading as having bad effects on students—and the novel, for its part, requires its hero to leave his studies early on, and treats school as a useless interlude that can be done without.

This opposition indicates the dual nature of modern socialization: an objective-specialistic process aimed at "functional integration" *into* the social order, which is the task of institutionalized education—and a subjective-generic process aimed at the "symbolic legitimation" *of* the social order, which is the task of literature. In other words: institutions such as schools act to socialize behavior, regardless of individual belief (one must *know* one's lesson—not believe in its truth). Institutions such as the novel aim at socializing what *The Theory of the Novel* calls our "soul": they see to that more or less conscious "consent" that guarantees continuity between individual existence and social structure. The enigmatic success of the *Teufelspakt* in modern culture—which surely has no fear of hell—is a sort of allegory of this second process: not only does modern man have a soul, but he can sell it, and there are always bidders.

4. Erwin Panofsky, "Die Perspektive als 'Symbolische Form,'" *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg,* Leipzig—Berlin 1927.

5. This also explains the *Bildungsroman*'s fondness for middle-class heroes: while the limits of the social spectrum usually remain relatively stable (conditions of extreme wealth and extreme poverty tend to change slowly), "in the middle" anything can happen—each individual can "make it" or "be broken" on his own, and life starts to resemble a novel. What makes the middle class an ideal sounding board of modernity is thus the *co-presence* of hope and disillusion: the very opposite of the Anglo-Saxon "middle-class theory of the novel," which explains the link between the novel and the middle class in terms of the "rise" and social consolidation of the latter. When this actually does take place—with the great bureaucratization of the past hundred years—it means the end of the Western novel in its original form: its two prime subverters, Kafka and Joyce, have very vividly portrayed, among other things, the metamorphosis of the middle class in this century.

6. On the thematic level we see this process of "regularization" in the novelistic hero's socialization. A young, intelligent, single male newly arrived in the city, this socially mobile and undefined hero embodies modernity's most tempestuous aspects: that is why it is precisely him, and not his more faded companions, who must be given "form"—even if it means, as is often the case, weakening his more lively features.

7. The four principal types of *Bildungsroman* highlight different problematic aspects of the formation of the Ego. The English *Bildungsroman* typically emphasizes the preliminary fear of the outside world as a menace for individual identity, while the Goethian ideal of harmony as a delicate compromise of heterogeneous commitments focuses on the Ego's internal dynamics. The French novelists take a more indirect course, which downplays the Ego proper, and emphasizes the dangers of an excessively forceful Super-Ego or Id, embodied in Stendhalian "idea of duty" and Balzacian "passion." In the latter instances—where, at the "story" level, the Ego is much weaker than in the former—the "discourse" level symptomatically becomes more important, and the narrator's *doxa* restores that equilibrium which the hero no longer possesses.

8. "Everyday life," "ordinary administration," "anthropocentrism," "personality," "experience," "opportunity": each of these terms will be discussed at length in the first chapter, since we find them most fully and coherently expressed in the classical *Bildungsroman.* Although much remains to be done here, I have nonetheless plunged for-

ward, hoping to have contributed somewhat to an area of study extremely interesting and rich in possibilities.

9. Dostoevsky, *precisely because* he is a novelist of final truths and of tragic and exceptional circumstances—as Bakhtin himself has noted more than once—never wrote a *Bildungsroman.* And Adorno, who has always insisted on art's vocation to truth, has never shown much interest in the *Bildungsroman,* or in the novel in general.

10. We should not be surprised then if, in tracing the various narrative rhetorics of nineteenth-century historiography in *Metahistory,* Hayden White mentions comedy, romance, satire and tragedy—but never the novel. Although the novel and historiography flourish during the same period, the former creates in fact—with "everyday life" and "ordinary administration"—a sort of *parallel temporality* which nineteenth-century historiography does not perceive as truly historical. The history of mentality and of the *longue durée* has of course changed all that, so that the object, and at times even the categories, of much contemporary historiography reveal strong similarities to those of the novel.

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Clifford Siskin

From The Historicity of Romantic Discourse

. . . though he admitted that her novels were an admirable copy of life, he could not be interested in productions of that kind; unless the truth of nature were presented to him clarified, as it were, by the pervading light of imagination, it had scarce any attractions in his eyes.

Sara Coleridge, speaking of Wordsworth[1]

What was achieved through the revisionary writing of development was a new "truth of nature" that Wordsworth, laboring within Romantic discourse, could simply refer to as "life." Since he took that sense of the natural to be absolute, the fact that Jane Austen shared it did not significantly affect his judgment of her. Instead, the evaluation followed what we now recognize to be a characteristic procedure: a distinction of "kind" became a distinction of degrees of imagination. The consequences of this maneuver are still with us in entrenched literary critical assumptions regarding Romanticism's "poetic" nature, the separate "rise" of the novel, the aesthetics of character, Austen's artistic and feminine "limits," and our own public and private understandings of what it means to be "human."

It is the power of those assumptions that has transformed the ongoing debate over whether Austen is a Romantic into a test case for contemporary literary historians. From the special issue of *The Wordsworth Circle* devoted to that topic to the divergent strategies of Susan Morgan and Marilyn Butler to Jerome McGann's ideological argument, it has become clear that how we place Austen has *always* to do with how we place ourselves in relation to the past. I want now to take the opportunity to consolidate a position outside Romantic discourse[2] by locating Wordsworth's lyric turn toward Imagination within it: the turn empowers the discourse by insisting on an exclusivity that denies the historicity of its own criteria for admission. Clarifying Austen's status, therefore, requires that we attend to what such a turn took, and still takes, for granted: she and Wordsworth shared a sense of the natural not because of its absolute validity, but because they both participated in the literary work of making that particular reality real. The writing of development, in other words, was an intergeneric phenomenon.

A literary history of Romanticism that engages that phenomenon is

"new" not only in avoiding the "six-poet" syndrome, but also in taking development to be its subject rather than its shape. It does not tell a tale of (poetry's) pre-Romantic origins or (the novel's) organic growth, for it recognizes development to be not a truth grounded in human psychology, but a formal strategy for naturalizing social and literary change: it functions to make change appear to make sense. This chapter thus concludes the section on the historicity of development by establishing the historicity of an author whose texts helped to redefine character as naturally "round," that is, capable of the ongoing transcendence of developmental change. The self made continuously deeper by interpretative revision became the psychologized subject. To see that redefinition as a formal activity shared by apparently diverse texts and writers is to reassess Austen's relationships to her predecessors in the novel, to contemporaries such as Wordsworth, to later nineteenth-century writers such as Marx and Darwin, and also to those twentieth-century critics who have found her such an attractive, but elusive, subject.

Although the language of desire easily insinuates itself into critical discourse, it is at first somewhat surprising to find it so pronounced in the criticism of one of our most "proper" authors. Walter Scott, for example, was but the first admirer to argue that her innovation was her mode of "excitation."[3] For Ian Watt her efforts, "representative" of "the increasingly important part" women were "playing . . . in the literary scene," bring about the "climax" of a rising genre.[4] Such language suggests the intensity both of the desire to know Jane Austen and of the resulting frustration so memorably expressed by Virginia Woolf: "of all the great writers," she is "the most difficult to catch in the act."[5]

Woolf's confession, of course, tells us more about the critic-as-voyeur than about Austen-as-artist. Peeking into another person's room is an inevitable posture of criticism that subordinates history to "greatness" and mystifies analysis as pursuit.[6] To pursue past greatness only exacerbates the great difficulties in knowing the past. In Austen's case, the obstacles are particularly treacherous not because she is inherently mysterious in her achievements or in her limits, but because the very distinctions (i.e., centuries, periods) that are the enabling acts of historical knowledge have only succeeded in obscuring our view and therefore heightening our interest. Jane Austen, in other words, is an object of such intense critical desire largely because our understanding of what she wrote is so radically triangulated by our confusion as to *when* she wrote it; as in her novels, attachment is finally a product of circumstance.[7]

The issue of Austen's revisions casts the question of "when" into very literal terms: are *Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice,* and *Northanger Abbey,* begun in 1795, 1796, and 1798 respectively, and published in 1811, 1813, and 1818, eighteenth- or nineteenth-century novels? Even if we shy away from the literal and grant more leeway between the critical categories and the actual digital shift, there is the temptation to dismiss the eighteenth/nineteenth-century distinction as the overzealous hindsight of contemporary scholars. A turn back to Scott, however, can allay such suspicions. His chronology of change leaves little leeway. Writing in 1815, he argues that Austen's works exemplify a new

"style of novel" that "has arisen within the last fifteen or twenty years."[8] Thus Ian Watt's claim of climax in *The Rise of the Novel* is but another entry in a debate over Austen's turn-of-the-century role that originated while she was still alive and to which Wordsworth contributed in his comments to Sara Coleridge.

Watt's is a particularly important entry, however, because the notion of an eighteenth-century "rise of the novel" is still an entrenched part of our critical vocabulary. But the question of what it was that rose problematizes that developmental history. If Watt is referring to a rise in esteem within the generic hierarchy, he is not accounting for the following: (1) the novel is a low form throughout the eighteenth century; (2) it is not until the 1820s that we find the following kind of statement: "The times *seem* to be past when an apology was requisite from reviewers for condescending to notice a novel" (emphasis mine)[9]; (3) the novel does not approach the top of the hierarchy until the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The "success" of Richardson and Fielding is misleading unless we realize that, although both were imitated, their works were generally regarded as sui generis masterpieces. Professional critics of the 1770s, for example, were not concerned, as J. M. S. Tompkins points out, with defining the novel as a distinct—let alone distinctive—form.[10]

If "rise" refers in some way to popularity in terms of the number of novels published, then Watt must be referring not just to the fifty years that are the major focus of his book, but to the entire century, since the annual production figure he cites is minute until 1740: seven a year. The subsequent "rise," however, poses yet another problem. It "was not in any way matched," says Watt, "by an increase in quality. With only a few exceptions the fiction of the last half of the eighteenth century . . . had little intrinsic merit" (290). Does this mean that, for Watt, the more the novel rises (numerically), the worse it gets? It would, if his "sociological" description of generic change did not turn out to be so heavily dependent on the notion of individual genius, the "exceptions."[11] His history's elision of a half-century of writing[12] thus necessarily increases the critical need for Jane Austen. She *must* be inserted at the end of the argument—that is to say, of the eighteenth century—to climax a rising form or, to put it more accurately, to revive a sagging one.

If different literary historical assumptions engender the desire for a more maternal Austen, a switch in centuries can produce the mother of the nineteenth-century novel. Some critics, especially those who assume change is necessarily continuous, prefer a Janus-headed Austen whose work bridges the centuries.[13] Others, such as T. B. Tomlinson, emphasize discontinuity: "Jane Austen's realisation of what living in society can mean is more like a literary revolution than a step in developing the novel."[14] As with her heroines, choice is inevitably the fate of Austen's critics.[15] Even those who disdain historical intentions, as Emma does matrimonial ones ("it is not my way or my nature"[16]), inevitably find themselves committed to the most "appropriate" embodiments of their desires. Thus what have often been presented and/or perceived as the two essentially autonomous endeavors of Austen criticism—the social, ranging from the ideological to the contextual, and the formal, in-

cluding the appreciative and the stylistic—are both rooted in the debate over her role in literary change initiated by Scott.

The recent surge of interest in defining a Romantic Jane Austen[17] should therefore be seen as anything but a peripheral undertaking of renegade Austen scholars and imperialistic Romanticists. Rather, the turning of it into what I have called a "test case" is not at all antithetical to the essentially historical nature of all Austen criticism. It allows us to refocus our attention on the problems of the conventional periodization of Romanticism that I raised in the introduction. First, as traditionally dated from 1798 to 1832, Romanticism complicates rather than clarifies the eighteenth/nineteenth century distinction: on the one hand, it is usually depicted as a reaction to or rejection of the former; on the other, the tag "nineteenth-century literature," particularly in regard to the novel, conventionally refers to post-1830 productions. A traditionally Romantic Jane Austen would thus belong to neither century, her isolation begging the essential questions of change and continuity. She would also, in a period that purports to be historically but is in fact generically defined, suffer a second type of isolation: how can an age of lyric poetry accommodate and account for a novelist?

These problems are most evident in the most determined efforts to place Austen in the company of her contemporaries. Joseph Kestner, for example, in trying to define "the tradition of the English Romantic Novel" with Austen as its "exemplar," arrives at dates (1800–32) that match the conventional ones, but only at the price of forgoing any meaningful connection between poetic and novelistic activity. He dismisses all questions of interaction or influence as "coincidence."[18] Susan Morgan does establish a link to the poetry in the shared "concern" with "perception," but her price is to turn her back on precisely what Kestner thinks he has gained: "I do not claim that Austen is a Romantic, primarily because readers as yet have no shared definition of a romantic tradition in fiction." Morgan's theoretical dilemma is dramatically evident, when, a few pages later, she writes: "And there is no forgetting Charlotte Lucas as she tells Elizabeth Bennet that 'I am not romantic, you know, I never was.' But Austen is. She always was."[19]

Marilyn Butler includes Austen in a book entitled *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries,* but then calls into question the validity of "Romanticism" as a historical label and dubs much of what is conventionally considered Romantic with the art-historical designation "Neo-classical."[20] Thus, in challenging Romanticism, Butler does not deny the need for making historical distinctions; in fact, it is the proliferation of those distinctions, both in terms of a severe fragmentation of temporal divisions and a profusion of labels for them, that indicates the generic limitations of an "empirical" history of "ideas" in which art is an "outlet" of social "controversy" (186–87). The five-year period from 1814 to 1819, for example, is divided by Butler into "three more or less chronological *phases*" (emphasis mine; 138). That kind of division is invoked again, along with a host of others, when Butler tries to sum up in the final chapter:

> Social pressures are complex, and the literary movements which reflect them may not succeed each other, but continue to coexist. In an effort to summarize

> the cultural crosscurrents of the revolutionary period one might point to some sort of division into successive phases, but these would be rough and the dates unreliable. It would seem that from about 1760 to the mid- or late 1790s a style prevailed which modern art critics have designated Neoclassicism. (180)

Butler slips with startling ease from "movements" to "crosscurrents" to "periods" to "phases" to "styles," because her concern with change is not clarified by a hierarchy of change. What, in other words, distinguishes a phase from a period? A developmental step from a revolution? An innovation from a variation?

Any barometer Butler might construct to measure what she calls "the pressure of ideas upon the entire social fabric" (186) would fluctuate unreliably and ahistorically, because the kind of history she writes idealizes ideas by granting them an autonomous existence outside the forms in which they are produced and received. Since, at any given historical moment, as I emphasized in regard to the footnote analyzed in chapter 3, those forms interrelate in a manner that determines the functions of their constituent parts, a history of idealized ideas cannot benefit from diachronic comparisons of those functions. When, for example, Butler argues that

> Wordsworth's experiments with subjects from among the lower orders of society, in metres appropriately taken from popular poetry, follow thirty years of public interest in this matter and this manner, and are thus characteristic of the culture of the Enlightenment (58)

the "thus" begs the question of change. Butler can and does consider how shifting political and social conditions affect the reception of such usages, but her kind of analysis cannot engage the crucial literary historical question of whether those thematic and metrical features function differently in Wordsworth's texts than they did in earlier ones. The same difficulty troubles her treatment of anti-jacobin story lines (100) and explains why Austen is treated at length in chapter 4 and the "Romantic Novel" separately three chapters later: delaying consideration of the contemporary sense of a "revolution . . . in fiction" until the latter chapter, well after the extended discussions of Austen's novels, effectively limits analysis of her role in generic change to a brief generalization concerning the conservative tendencies of realism.

To expand that analysis requires avoiding both the pitfalls of the conventional periodization of Romanticism as well as the temptation to discard that label without an adequate conceptual replacement. A first step, as I pointed out in chapter 1, is to think of Romanticism as a norm rather than a period, so that the emphasis falls less on exact chronological margins that on generically configured discourses that are normative (or in transition) for a length of time; a distinction can thereby be made between change understood as variation within the normal set of generic interrelations and an innovative shift in the overall hierarchy that signals norm change. Austen's novelistic efforts are in that sense innovative, for they participated in an alteration of interrelations in which "old" and "new" parts perform different functions within a whole that is thus conceptually different from its predecessors.

The generic part that I am arguing is of particular importance to an anal-

ysis of Austen—development—has not previously been treated as such, for, as we have seen in the last two chapters, the culture has so heavily invested it with truth value. How dear a commitment that has continued to be, in criticism of the novel as well as of poetry, is evident in A. Walton Litz's response to a generous quotation he provides concerning the structuralist critique of "psychological coherence":

> If we leave aside this modern assault upon the very notions of identity and the "self," I think we can say that Jane Austen at her best managed to create characters which satisfy the broadest range of critical expectations: they are both mimetic and autonomous, matching our sense of external reality and our sense of structural completeness. A combination of absolute naturalness and absolute self-consciousness has been the foundation of Jane Austen's enduring reputation.[21]

What we cannot "leave aside" is the fact that we are now experiencing a kind of change that has not occurred since Austen's own time. The same shift in generic interrelations that is allowing for a new literary history is also providing us with an often unsettling perspective on our Romantic/nineteenth-century origins. That perspective suggests not that we must choose a "best" sense of character, but that we can recognize the historicity of all versions by calling into question such concepts as "absolute naturalness."

Having done so in the first two chapters of this section, I can turn to the novel without treating development thematically, in the manner of almost all Austen criticism,[22] as an attribute of "rounded" characters representing a truth of human psychology. Instead, I will analyze it as a formal strategy, originating in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century discourse, for naturalizing the changing interrelations of social and literary forms. Its intergeneric presence in Romanticism indicates that we are seeing in Austen the beginning of the lyricization of the novel, a process culminating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and descriptive of the actual hierarchical generic rise of the modern novel. In analyzing the kind of change formalized in development we see how Wordsworth and Austen, poetry and the novel, do much more than just, in Stuart Tave's word, "touch." They cannot be known in isolation from each other.

Both forms, as I indicated in chapter 4, performed conduct book functions at the turn into the nineteenth century, redefining "real" behavior as the material conditions of English society were being transformed by an economic "takeoff." Debate over the form of the novel, for example, quiescent during the 1770s, accelerated in pursuit of a principle of stabilizing unity (Tompkins, 331) in a language prescriptive of behavior intended to conserve that unity. Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads,* as well as the reactions it inspired, were similarly permeated with claims as to the truly "natural" and with the word "real" in all its grammatical forms.[23] In other words, what appeared as aesthetic arguments over the principle or verisimilitude in the novel, and over linguistic propriety in poetry, was a highly charged debate over the modes of *conformity* appropriate to a "new" society.

Our earlier turn to the novels of Sensibility gave us some sense of the shape of this debate in its novelistic incarnation. I now want to place it within a broader historical field by briefly examining the midcentury positions of Fielding and Richardson, as evidenced in their extratextual defenses of *Joseph Andrews* and *Clarissa.* What is especially noteworthy about those defenses is that they are consistently two-pronged; that is, defense of form is always mutually reinforced by defense of behavior. In his Preface, for example, Fielding offers his theory of the novel as well as a justification of the morality and behavior of his characters, particularly Parson Adams. The key word informing both endeavors is "nature," for the "comic" is distinguished from the "burlesque" by its adherence to the natural, with the former supposedly featuring "characters" who are so "real" that Fielding must disavow any resemblance to actual people. The latter, however, "exhibits monsters, not men": "what *Caricatura* is in painting, Burlesque is in writing."[24]

By calling his "comic romance" a "comic epic-poem in prose" predicated on a "lost" Homeric model, Fielding is, as noted by Watt and others, attempting to put a disreputable genre "into the highest possible literary context" (Watt, 258). The historicity of "highest," and the accompanying idea of interrelations, however, have not been sufficiently stressed. Fielding chose epic because he and other writers at that time took it and dramatic tragedy to be dominant forms.[25] They assumed that incorporating features from those forms into their own would raise their productions within a hierarchy that they took to be absolute. As the products of such an interrelation, the epic features are supposed to serve the purpose in Fielding's comic "modern" romance of suggesting the eighteenth-century ideal of order in variety.[26] The epic's "exten[sion]," "comprehensiveness," "large[ness]," and "variety," expanded comically to include "inferior" persons, are turned by the circular pattern of romance to satiric affirmations of natural rank. The story of form in the Preface thus parallels the form of the story. Both the novel and Joseph must recover "lost" parents to lay claim to higher status.

Clarissa, like *Joseph Andrews,* is described on its title page as a "History," but, as with Fielding, Richardson's formal ambitions are extratextually evident. The Preface to volume one, split cleanly between discussions of the epistolary form and the characters' behaviors, implicitly suggests his strategy by emphasizing the "dramatic" strength of the novel.[27] It is not until the Postscript to the entire work, however, that it is explicitly clarified:

> The author of the history (or rather dramatic narrative) of Clarissa, is therefore well justified by the Christian system, in deferring to extricate suffering virtue to the time in which it will meet with the completion of its reward.
>
> But not absolutely to shelter the conduct observed in it under the sanction of religion (an authority perhaps not of the greatest weight with some of our modern critics) it must be observed, that the author is justified in its catastrophe by the greatest master of reason, and best judge of composition, that ever lived. The learned reader knows we must mean ARISTOTLE. (IV, 554)

Not only has the "history" become a "dramatic narrative," but a dramatic narrative of a "high" kind: the discussion of Aristotle, of course, concerns his

definition of tragedy. Again, the interrelations tell the story. Clarissa's behavior is justified and her fate patterned by the providential conventions of Christian romance: the author "hast endeavoured to draw that [the death] of the good in such an amiable manner, that the very Balaams of the world should not forbear to wish that their latter end might be like that of the heroine" (IV, 554). Lovelace's behavior, however, requires a different formal explanation: his failure to reform is defended in terms of the incorporation of tragic features. They function providentially to enforce the "doctrine of future rewards" by setting Lovelace's death, as the "tragic poets" were wont to do, in the "shocking lights" of absolute despair.

As with Fielding, who observes that his heightened writing has not "hitherto [been] attempted in our language" (7), Richardson claims that he has done "something that never yet had been done" (IV, 553). But eighteenth-century innovation is always posited as imitation, suggesting the recovery and reinforcement of traditional hierarchy rather than the breaking of boundaries. In Fielding, the act of imitation mystifies authority through absence: the loss of the Homeric model. Richardson accomplishes the same task by invoking Presence: the "poetical justice" of his providential tragedy is but a reenactment of what "God, by revelation, teaches us."

Thus, in terms of hierarchical interrelations, these arguments for incorporating the epic and tragic in the novel represent efforts to produce a generic "rise" of the novel in the first half of the eighteenth century. Efforts to do the same in the second half point not to sagging quality or to a lack of able imitators or new genius, but to the same kinds of generic impasse we noted in Young's prose and Collins's poetry. *The Castle of Otranto,* the first of the Gothic novels that dominate prose fiction in the latter part of the century, is another example of an effort to bring into an established set of interrelations ways of behaving that no longer seem to fit. Walpole moves from an initial posture of embarrassment—he disavows authorship in the first edition, claiming to have found the manuscript—to presenting arguments in prefaces that, like his predecessors', fuse formal and behavioral issues; he justifies his novel's action and his characters' actions in terms of the same "high" precedents. Like Richardson, Walpole appeals to the drama; Shakespeare as tragedian is his particular authority for a fiction that is superior because it is theatrical. The literary historical results of this venture, however, were mixed. Although the concept of romantic realism, Fancy and Nature combined, drew many imitators, *Otranto* itself, as a *formal* model for accomplishing that feat, proved to be problematic: in fact, it was the particular "tragic" features singled out for praise by Walpole, strict adherence to the unities and the necessity of exaggerated comic contrast, that were selected out of Gothic fiction as the century drew to a close.[28]

Evidence of generic difficulties can also be found in contemporary critical writing. In 1775, for example, Henry Mackenzie described the "degradation into which" the novel "has fallen" by invoking the still nominally accepted high forms, but not, significantly, in terms of shared strengths:

> Considered in the abstract, as containing an interesting relation of events, illustrative of the manners and characters of mankind, it surely merits a higher sta-

> tion in the world of letters than is generally assigned it. If it has not the dignity, it has at least most of the difficulties, of the Epic or the Drama.

Mackenzie attributes the novel's failure to live up to its "abstract" potential to a lack of judgmental and compositional criteria; the available normative models, in other words, are somehow inadequate. The resulting "debasement" is behavioral as well as formal: a "perversion from a moral or instructive purpose to one directly the reverse."[29]

Any literary historian recounting these types of statements faces the temptation to abstract them from their conceptual context and posit them as *inherent* difficulties in the "development" of *the* novel. Jane Austen, as we have seen, can then be conveniently introduced as the solution: a writer who, for a start, appears to be neither morally perverse nor problematically committed to a single insufficient model of the novel. The most common scenario has Austen combining Fielding's "outer" view and Richardson's "inner" view into a more complete whole.[30] But to posit that kind of connection is to replace an analysis of change with a deterministic narrative in which the possibility of radical difference is submerged in assumptions of continuity. The contours of the resulting literary history are all too familiar: the eighteenth century, particularly its latter half, pays the price of such assumptions by being implicitly or explicitly subordinated to Romanticism. The price the literary historian pays is the inability to gauge his or her own historicity: the extent to which key aesthetic judgments and critical interpretations are but repetitions of Romantic formulations supposedly "discovered" in the texts. To assume unselfconsciously, for example, that a merging of the inner and outer constitutes a solution to any literary historical problem is itself a literary historical problem.

Austen's own sense of her relationship to the past is clearly falsified by the insistent continuity of the causal perspective. She does not, for example, answer Mackenzie's complaint regarding the morality of the novel. In fact, in a gesture indicative of conceptual discontinuity, she refuses to even accept it as a valid issue for a novelist to address: "I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern," says the authorial voice at the end of *Northanger Abbey,* "whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience."[31] This disavowal does not, of course, mean that Austen is unconcerned with morality or the pedagogical function of the novel. It does indicate that questions under the pressure of historical change do not engender answers but are reclassified into a new set of questions. Austen recasts the behavioral issue in terms that were meant to be, and still often are, taken as morally neutral. Her apparently modest intention is just to describe how people really act in everyday situations. This is Wordsworth's language in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads,* and as we saw in regard to the notion of "habitual" perception in chapter 5, such descriptions of "reality" are never morally neutral.

Neither can they be informal, by which I do not mean "casual" or "disordered," but "unrelated to a characteristic set of formal interrelations." Like Richardson and Fielding, Austen offers a story of form in her extratextual comments, but its historical significance has been overlooked through a com-

bination of authorial modesty and critical misdirection. Austen's apparently self-deprecatory references both to her "bit[s] . . . of Ivory," as opposed to "strong, manly, spirited Sketches, full of Variety and Glow," and to her supposed inability to write "serious romance" or "epic poe[try],"[32] have been swept up by critics into the Limitations Debate: an effort, perhaps inspired by her supposedly elusive greatness, to catch her, this time, in the act of weakness. Only Donald Greene, among the many participants in this debate, has argued forcefully for the importance of organizing it along formal lines. But Greene's purpose is, finally, to vindicate Austen, and his game plan requires that he substitute "Tradition" for diachronicity: he formally divides his novelistic all-stars into two opposing teams—the Epic, featuring Fielding-Scott-Dickens, and the Dramatic, featuring Richardson-Austen-James—and awards the game to the latter, where "the true genius of the novel lies."[33]

When genres are essentialistically transformed into traditions, the result is not just, as Greene admits, "oversimplification," but fundamental confusion. Thus in opposing Fielding to Richardson as the respective Fathers of the Epic Novel and of the Novel as "drama, in particular the comic drama," he fails to acknowledge that for those midcentury novelists the epic model, as we saw in *Joseph Andrews,* is comic, and the dramatic model, as in *Clarissa,* is tragic. As a result, if we were to describe the latter work using Greene's distinctions, it would be a novel that does *not* have "tendencies" to "sprawl" or "to describe things in black and white, exaggerating the goodness of the hero and the badness of the villains." It *would,* however, be "neat" and "compact" with "ordinary, easily recognizable characters," and a "preference for saying to the reader, in effect, 'That's how it was; make up your own mind about it'" (165–66). This last characteristic provides particularly vivid proof that the continuity of tradition is no more reliable than the continuity of cause and effect. The specific dramatic features Richardson introduces into *Clarissa* are interrelated not to displace moral judgment onto the reader but to heighten the novel's overt didacticism: a didacticism characteristic of the discourse of his time but, as I argued in chapter 4, an embarrassment in ours. The displacement is not, as Greene would have it, a historical characteristic of an ongoing tradition, but a generic feature subject to historical change. Its striking appearance in the concluding sentence of *Northanger Abbey* is linked, as we have seen, to a discontinuous conceptual shift.

The Limitations Debate has functioned critically as but a blind to the manner in which Austen's statements about form confirm not an individual preference or fault but the scope of that shift. They indicate, with remarkable precision, that she rejects, not as wrong but for her inconceivable, the earlier strategies for raising the novel through the incorporation of epic "variety" or tragic "seriousness." But the apparent modesty of the maker of "bits of Ivory" is once again deceptive; Austen by no means abandons the task of bettering the novel. Her efforts transpire, however, within an altered set of interrelations in which "old" and "new" features perform different functions within a form that is thus conceptually different from the productions of Richardson and Fielding. To understand that difference we need to turn first to the description of it by Austen and her contemporaries.

Mary Brunton's *Self-Control,* according to Austen, was "an excellently-meant, elegantly-written Work, without anything of Nature or Probability" (*Letters,* 344). The modern reader may be tempted to assume a significant degree of synonymity between the latter two terms, but in the early nineteenth century it was the difference that was significant—so significant, in fact, that it bore the weight of a major historical distinction. Both Scott, in describing Austen as a "new" novelist, and Richard Whately, who five years later quotes at length from Scott and elaborates the argument, posit generic change in terms of the degree of conformity to what is natural, within the realm of possibility, *and* what is probable, that is, likely. Whately explains that

> a fiction is unnatural when there is some assignable reason against the events taking place as described,—when men are represented as acting contrary to the character assigned them, or to human nature in general; as when a young lady of seventeen, brought up in ease, luxury and retirement, with no companions but the narrow-minded and illiterate, displays (as a heroine usually does) under the most trying circumstances, such wisdom, fortitude, and knowledge of the world, as the best instructors and the best examples can rarely produce without the aid of more mature age and longer experience.—On the other hand, a fiction is still *improbable,* though *not unnatural,* when there is no reason to be assigned why things should not take place as represented, except that the *over-balance of chances is* against it; the hero meets, in his utmost distress, most opportunely, with the very person to whom he had formerly done a signal service, and who happens to communicate to him a piece of intelligence which sets all to rights. Why should he not meet him as well as any one else? All that can be said is, that there is no reason why he should. (Southam, 89–90)

According to both critics, the eighteenth-century novel was distinguished from the "ancient romance" by an adherence to the natural but not the probable. Its author, explained Scott, was "expected to tread pretty much in the limits between the concentric circles of probability and possibility; and as he was not permitted to transgress the latter his narrative, to make amends, almost always went beyond the bounds of the former" (Southam, 61). Whately argues that this is a form of duplicity, for the author who "professes to describe what may actually take place . . . [in] human affairs," but then presents us "with a series of events quite unlike any which ever do take place," gives us "reason to complain that he has not made good his profession." This improbability, concludes Whately, is an inadequacy that is at least partially responsible for the formerly low generic rank of the novel beneath "plays" and "verse." The achievement of Austen as a "new" novelist is to adhere to the probable as well as the natural, thereby "elevating" the form "in some respects at least, into a much higher class" (Southam, 91–92).

At issue, of course, keeping in mind the relationship between form and behavior, is not only literary class but social class as well; for defining probability is a matter of setting standards of behavior, and adhering to it indicates the skillful conformity that assures social security. However, insecurity of social rank, as I noted earlier, is precisely what accelerates in the latter half of the eighteenth century, thus inflating the value of the probable. To ascertain how

that value comes to be represented in the novel, we need only compare representative texts: *Joseph Andrews* and *Pride and Prejudice.* Both Scott and Whately cite Fielding for a combination of naturalness and improbability. The central improbability of *Joseph Andrews* is the main character's relationship to his own origin; he does not know it because he was kidnapped as a babe by gypsies. For him to assume his proper rank and thus smooth the social fabric ruffled by his marital intentions, he requires, to use two of Whately's synonyms for the improbable, "lucky accidents" and "singular coincidences." Elizabeth Bennet, on the other hand, knows who her parents are and, following Darcy's lead, decides they are inadequate. How, then, can the social gap be bridged and the marriage occur? In lieu of gypsies and luck, Austen posits what by the early part of the nineteenth century is understood as a "real" behavior; she psychologizes her characters' differences and posits a probable solution: development. They come to love each other as origins are reexamined and newly understood not as absolutely restrictive, but preparatory. By mid-century, autobiography is understood as prelude.

Our continuing commitment to those concepts as truths has prevented us from gauging the historicity of development as both a probable behavior and an innovative formal strategy. It is, in fact, no more inherently probable than coincidence, and, in our sense of the word, it would have been as foreign to Homer or Shakespeare or Pope as gypsies are to us. Thus, unless we assume that Austen was the first author to notice that people develop, or that development is a biological trait that first enters the gene pool in the late eighteenth century, we must account for it in terms of a reclassification of the changing forms of social and literary experience: it recasts the "natural" relationships between parts and wholes, individuals and communities.

Socioeconomic historians such as Harold Perkin and Dorothy Marshall have exploited a spatial metaphor from the nineteenth century to help clarify this change. "At some point," argues Perkin, "between the French Revolution and the Great Reform Act, the vertical antagonisms and horizontal solidarities of class emerged on a national scale and overlay the vertical bonds and horizontal rivalries of connection and interest."[34] The concept of "Interests" applied to the eighteenth century, Marshall emphasizes, must not be taken to imply actual nationwide "organization," for that "would have been beyond the administrative capacity of the age."[35] What it does describe is a historical form of social experience in which the individual's place is within a particular "community of advantage," whether it be Landed, Commercial, Financial, or Industrial, that embraces the entire range of social and economic ranks. The embrace is won and held by using the patriarchal language of patronage to naturalize those hierarchical distinctions as distinctions of kin/kind. But the price of vertical familiarity was horizontal estrangement. Individuals, observes Perkin, "were acutely aware of their exact relation to those above and below them, but only vaguely conscious except at the very top of their connections with those on their own level." Such consciousness, concludes Perkin, is possible "only in large scale communities, where the individual can unite with others of his kind to defeat the ubiquitous pressures of personal dependency" (24, 37).

That type of community was, of course, a major product of Britain's accel-

eration into a growth economy in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. "Growth" here refers not only to economic statistics, but also to population and the makeup of that population. As total industrial production doubled between 1780 and 1800 (Perkin, 2), Britain was experiencing a sharp rise in population that Marilyn Butler, among others, speculates was "perhaps the most significant agent of change in the second half of the eighteenth century" (12). "Not only," notes Dorothy Marshall, did "the most rapid rise in the birth rate between 1780 and 1820" increase "the population materially," but it also "altered the composition of the age groups within it. Though the death rate was heavy . . . it seems to have dropped below its eighteenth-century peak. The result was a greater proportion of children, teenagers, and young adults in the population" (4).

The vertical and horizontal changes described by Perkin thus occurred within a society in which a growing economy was altering the lives of a growing population increasingly concerned with the phenomenon of growing up.[36] The hierarchical distinctions of kind, most suited to small-scale communities, thus came to be experienced as restrictive by those whose sheer numbers prevented them from being accommodated within the old bonds of patronage and personal dependency. Families in Austen, usually represented by the patriarch, are experienced as inescapably present, perhaps well-meaning, but always inadequate.[37] Sir Walter Elliot reads his family history over and over again because it is never enough, and when he tries to supplement it by adding the name of an heir presumptive, inadequacy manifests itself as humiliation. Supplementation in terms of the projection of kinship ties on social interactions outside the "exceedingly fluctuating" (*Sense and Sensibility,* 373) immediate family—Knightly is Emma's "Uncle" and Miss Taylor is her "Sister"—is also understood as impermanent and therefore potentially treacherous. The vocabulary of relationship in Austen is therefore strikingly violent, filled with "stabbings," "cruelty," "pain," "agony," "terror," and "betrayal." People, to use one of Austen's favorite verbs, cannot help but "impose" upon other people and upon themselves, their impositions being a product of the increasing insecurity of hierarchical position.

As vertical estrangement increased, so did horizontal familiarity. But to become "conscious" of "connections" with others on one's "own level," one first must know how to identify that level. Such knowledge, which had been seen solely as a variable of external familial fact, was now, given the inadequacy of kind, thought to be at least partially the result of a reflexive turn inward: the degree of self-knowledge. "To understand," says the narrator of *Emma,* "thoroughly understand her own heart, was the *first* endeavour" (emphasis mine; 412). As the product of an act of mind—"understanding"—social position was effectively psychologized into a state of mind. And the strategy for naturalizing a hierarchy of such states manifests itself as a behavioral truth cast in the language of economic growth: development. It makes probable a reality that accommodates the experience of instability as a prelude to a more mature order. Thus, after Harriet's revelation, Emma "realizes" that she has not been in her right state of mind; instability understood as "madness" (408) had led her to violate social position by toying with Harriet and insulting Miss Bates. Get-

ting "acquainted" with her true self reestablishes propriety in psychosocial terms both through the discovery of horizontal connection, with Knightly, and through the heightening of vertical paranoia, toward Harriet. "Such a development of self, such a burst of threatening evil" (409) is the form of fate faced by all of Austen's heroines: just as Elizabeth's union with Darcy entails a defensive distancing from Lydia and Wickham, so Fanny's love of Mansfield Park is keyed to her dislike of Portsmouth.

The innovative significance of these developmental texts is in no way diminished by Austen's domesticity or by her politics. Far from signaling limitation or detachment from the sweeping social changes I have described, her domesticity is itself a product of the gap between home and the workplace opened by those changes. Since that distinction is a historical rather than biological phenomenon,[38] development, as a contemporary strategy, can work its magic in both realms. Domesticated within "feminine" discourse, it produces what many even admiring readers take to be relatively innocuous novels of courtship and marriage: the horizontal connections extend only to a husband and a "small band of true friends" (*Emma,* 484), and the vertical antagonisms are directed primarily at familial dead weight and former rivals. How far from innocuous these spatial maneuvers are becomes unavoidably clear when we observe the results in "masculine" discourse. There, the psychologizing of social position through self-conscious horizontal solidarity and vertical difference shows itself to be the strategy by which the early nineteenth century reordered its understanding of social relationships. As opposed to the concept of "Interest," notes Diana Spearman, "an essential element in the idea of class is that it is somehow an ineradicable part of the psychological make-up of its individual members, and also something shared with others."[39] Development, in other words, is the in*forming* strategy of class consciousness. Whether employed by Austen, or a few decades later by Engels and Marx, it presents hierarchical change wrought by growth as natural by linking economic activity and behavioral probability.

In *The Condition of the Working-Class in England,* for example, Engels describes "class" in terms of a "way of thinking and acting" and claims his "premises" are based on "undeniable facts, partly of historical development, partly facts inherent in human nature."[40] For him, for Austen, and for others who share such a combination of "natural" assumptions, the resulting narratives of "reality" emerging out of everyday experience posit causality as materialistic and circumstantial, and closure as a return from illusion rewarded by (horizontal) union. Engels and Marx's proletarian protagonists are, like Marianne Dashwood, "born to an extraordinary fate" (*Sense and Sensibility,* 378): to experience change as inevitable, threatening, but ultimately accommodating to class-ified desire.

To suggest this strategic connection with radical discourse is not to argue for what David Monaghan calls the "subversive" Austen. He is right in asserting that the "case made out by Duckworth and Butler" for Austen's conservatism is "essentially indestructible" (*Austen in Social Context,* 6). Development's function is not necessarily to undermine hierarchy but, as I have tried to show, to naturalize its instability as a sign of maturation. That sign may

point to a rejustified gentry or a galvanized proletariat, but it always does so in order to make change make sense.

How culturally pervasive a goal that becomes after Austen can be seen by turning from literary and philosophical discourse to the scientific. Darwin's "natural" nineteenth-century concern with nature was to naturalize biological *change* by classifying his data into a developmental narrative. This effort was, of course, no more ideologically innocent than Austen's or Marx's. We cannot, however, grasp its historical and cultural significance if we do not have the critical vocabulary to acknowledge radical/conservative distinctions as important but different in kind from the conceptual changes that accompany new sets of normative interrelations and strategies. Romanticism is thus a very valuable label when used to describe the shared formal activity of apparently diverse authors. In regard to Austen, it clarifies the innovative status of her novels and provides a sound theoretical basis for intergeneric comparison.

Austen's rejection of epic and tragic models for the novel in favor of a turn to the probable confirms that the sense of the hierarchy of literary forms, like the social hierarchy, was undergoing significant change. To analyze how the novel is reclassified, we need to decode that turn, since, as we have seen, the probable was not a given but the product of a formal strategy. Marianne's "extraordinary fate" is, through the ironic magic of probability, to be ordinary, because that is precisely what development does to the experience of change: it makes it fit in with everyday life. The "ordinary extraordinary," that problematic Romantic relationship between what we experience and how we experience it,[41] was a central concern of Austen in her novels as it was for Wordsworth in his poetry, for her texts, like his, played major roles in reforming and replacing their respective genres in a reordered hierarchy: a hierarchy that authorized development through the revisionary activity of features (e.g., Trapp's odal turns and the apostrophe to the reader) that came to be associated with lyric subjectivity.

To note these interrelations of kind in texts such as *The Prelude* and *Northanger Abbey,* two early, much revised, and posthumously published works, is to exhibit the explanatory power of a history in which genre is not essentialistically defined and historical classifications are not unigenerically constrained. *The Prelude,* for example, begins with what is usually discussed as a "personal" crisis: an initial lyrical outburst quickly collapses into thematic confusion and authorial self-doubt. However, the issue here is the same impersonal one that informed Austen's supposedly self-imposed limits. Neither writer finds it possible at the turn of the century to use the traditionally normative models. Wordsworth recites an entire catalogue of inherited possibilities, including epic and tragedy, but finds them all inadequate: "either still I find / Some imperfection in the chosen theme, / Or see of absolute accomplishment / Much wanting" (I.261–64).[42] That want is then internalized as a want "in myself," a gesture of inadequacy that paradoxically justifies the author's "creative" authority. In the lyric turn that I have shown to be normative for nineteenth- and much of twentieth-century literature *and* criticism, Wordsworth modestly retreats from "work / Of ampler or more varied argument" to "a theme / Single

and of determined bounds" (I.641–44). Like Austen, who insists "I must keep to my own style and my own way," a bounded way in which "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on" (*Letters,* 453, 401), Wordsworth argues that he *must* do what he can do best. What they both do best, of course, are studies in characterological development, for the turn to development allows them to naturalize the destabilizing experience of social and literary change.

Wordsworth's repeated justifications of this turn, in Book 1 and throughout *The Prelude,* are revisionary both in the attempt to change how the reader reads (he begs Coleridge, the reader surrogate, for tolerance and sympathy), and in their interpretative relationship to each other (the repetition suggests an ongoing struggle in which something—himself—is evermore about to be). To take egotism as the central issue raised by Wordsworth's decision to write about himself at a length "unprecedented in Literary history" (*Early Letters,* 586–87), is thus to miss the point: without a developmental strategy in which ongoing revisions of the types detailed in the last chapter extend the text, the most egotistical person in the world would not—in fact, could not—write that much about himself. Egotism is also not the issue in Austen's famous defense of the novel in chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey.* This is no plucky young thing spontaneously defending all novels, but an innovative writer carefully defending her type of new novel against "improbable" and "unnatural" writing (38).

Austen's narratives connect probability to change in much the same way Wordsworth's efforts do: the central character becomes deep by embodying problematic forms of behavior only to return to the probable and the rewards of horizontal union.[43] The Poet cannot begin *The Prelude,* for example, without rejecting inherited forms and seeking communion with Coleridge, and he cannot end it, as I emphasized in chapter 4, until he rejects the false behaviors attributed to the French Revolution and Godwin and "marries" into a new/old family: Coleridge as the father/brother, Dorothy as the mother/sister, Mary as the wife, and Raisley Calvert, given significantly strong billing as the rich uncle who dies to ensure that the stability is economic as well as spiritual. In *Northanger Abbey,* Catherine Morland's "probable" fate is similarly to reject the Gothic forms of behavior she has internalized, thanks to a developmental revelation ("how altered a being did she return," 237) that is characteristically accompanied by a clarification of everyone's real socio-economic status. Since development psychologizes that status as the proper state of mind, it is appropriate that the rejection of old behaviors involves guilt-ridden reactions to breaches of propriety that are also violations of private property. The young Poet steals a boat, only to find that a "huge peak" overlooking the lake "Towered up" and "like a living thing, / Strode after me" (I.378–85). Catherine, who had earlier violated an old chest only to find "a white cotton counterpane," steals a look at a pile of papers whose secret turns out to be not romantic but economic: it is a collection of bills. Her guilt at having "*imposed* on herself" (emphasis mine) is imaged in strikingly Wordsworthian fashion: "She felt humbled to the dust. Could not the adventure of the chest have taught her wisdom? A corner of it catching her eye as she lay, seemed to rise up in judgment against her" (173).

Wordsworth calls these episodes spots of time, for development plots temporal change spatially so that it can always be represented as a return to one's proper economic/psychological place.[44] The journeys may be more (*Mansfield Park*) or less (*Pride and Prejudice*) spatialized, but the temporal dimension always fades into a "natural" mystery, for what is found has been there as the most probable alternative all along: the real self. In developmental analysis, says Wordsworth, each particular "Hath no beginning" (II.232). Edmund, we are told at the end of *Mansfield Park,* fell in love with Fanny "when it was quite *natural* that it should be so" (emphasis mine; 470). This decision to "purposely abstain from dates" is also Darcy's tactic in answering Elizabeth's dangerously loaded question concerning the "beginning" of their love: "I cannot fix on the hour, or the spot, or the look, or the words, which laid the foundation. It is too long ago. I was in the middle before I knew that I *had* begun" (380). Critics who ask whether Darcy or any of Austen's other characters "really change" only trip over the historicity of their own adverb, for development defines the real in a manner that finesses the whole issue: difference, in Austen's and Wordsworth's developmental reality, collapses imperceptibly into continuity.

The lyrical model in both cases is the sonnet, in which the radical discontinuity of the turn is always rounded off by the radical continuity of the fourteen-line whole. Longer narratives depicting that continuity, in the words of a midnineteenth-century reviewer, consist not of a "labyrinthine *nexus* of events" but the "skillful evolution of . . . processes." Echoing the spirit of Scott's 1815 judgment that "*Emma* has *even less* story than either of the preceding novels" (emphasis mine; Southam, 65), the reviewer concludes of Austen that of "plot she has little or none."[45] The novels are, of course, not really void of events; rather, developmental strategy has dictated that they be psychologized so that the instability they threaten can be naturalized by a proper turn of mind. Just as in *The Prelude* the Poet's journeys to the Alps and France are depicted as mental detours, so Catherine's psychological and physical return to the safety of her English home is preceded by imagined stops among the "vices" and "horrors" of "the Alps and Pyrenees . . . Italy, Switzerland, and the South of France" (200). That such threats can be transformed into what Wordsworth calls that "calm existence that is mine when I / Am worthy of myself" (I.49–50), is a matter of developmental faith: "strange things may be generally accounted for if their cause be fairly searched out" (*Northanger Abbey,* 16).

The narrator's immediate reference is the heroine's empty love life, but the language unmistakably echoes a description of Catherine herself offered a few paragraphs earlier: "What a strange, unaccountable character!" (14). To simplify the accounting process, Austen posits character as a problem of unity: how, for example, to reconcile Catherine's "profligacy" with her good heart, or why Emma only "*seemed* to unite some of the best blessings of existence" (emphasis mine; 5). As I suggested at the end of chapter 4, when characterological unity informs textual unity, form is effectively psychologized, producing developmental models that become normative for Romanticism. Within those models, authors and readers have distinctive roles to play. Since the experience

of reading, for example, is now the experience of knowing a character, authors must make their characters, in G. H. Lewes's words, "equal to actual experience." To make them "accurately real"[46] is the new mode of "excitation" Scott attributed to Austen.

How this is accomplished, and the reader's appropriate response, have been the subjects of an unintentional but, I would argue, not surprising intergeneric critical consensus. Both Robert Langbaum, in analyzing the nineteenth-century poetry of experience initiated by Wordsworth, and Wayne Booth, in discussing Austen's innovative techniques, speak of the author's activity as an inside/outside movement and the reader's response as a combination that, by this point in our argument, is most familiar: sympathy and judgment.[47] Far from being coincidental, this critical match confirms the presence of a strategy shared by both poet and novelist. Once we acknowledge it, the rationale behind the prescribed behaviors is clarified. Reading and writing, like all forms of experience, must be naturalized through the spatial maneuvers I described earlier: the value of the literary is psychologized by engaging it through both horizontal union (inside sympathy) *and* vertical distancing (outside judgment). This is why "accurately real" literature becomes in the nineteenth century a really "exciting" part of growing up, an index to development: witness Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and Mill's description of Wordsworth's effect on his life. It is a phenomenon that is central to both *The Prelude,* with its Book on Books, and *Northanger Abbey,* in which what one reads so clearly affects how one matures.

If Austen had this much in common with Wordsworth and other nineteenth-century writers, why did he, Charlotte Bronte, and others later in the century dismiss her?[48] The answer is simply that, for them, development came to be the "truth of nature"—a given—and thus a no more valid basis of comparison than death or taxes to us. Judgment thus depended upon the turn to psychological degree that Wordsworth mystified as a "clarifi[cation]" of nature "by the pervading light of imagination." He disregarded Austen because *her* mystification of the newly "natural"—what one critic has labeled the "improvement of the estate"[49]—varied from his. Bronte was similarly affronted, as have been all those critics who, even in supposed admiration, have embraced the "limited" Austen. But the Austen they get reflects the historicity of their desires, and Bronte's generic fate was not to innovate upon Austen's model, but to more *overtly* lyricize it. By attending to such interrelations, a generic history can distinguish variation from innovation and thus clarify the relationship of the present to the past. When we place ourselves outside Romantic discourse we see Austen's novels, as well as Wordsworth's poems, within it.

Notes

1. *Memoirs and Letters of Sara Coleridge,* edited by her daughter (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1874), p. 77.

2. I am not implying, of course, that anyone can step out of any discourse at any time. It is our *historical* relationship to Romantic discourse that makes this particular

maneuver possible at this time. Such a step, as I have been emphasizing in this generic history, never entails an absolute break with the past, but a reclassification of features (my re-placing of Wordsworth's turn) that involves discontinuity and continuity.

3. Sir Walter Scott, unsigned article in *Quarterly Review* 14 (Oct. 1815), reprinted in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage,* ed. B. C. Southam (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 63 (cited hereafter as Southam). References to how Austen "excites" the reader occur throughout the selections that make up this volume.

4. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957).

5. Virginia Woolf, "Jane Austen at Sixty," *Nation* 34 (15 Dec. 1923), 433.

6. This is not, of course, a personal attack on Woolf's competence. I am only pointing out how certain critical assumptions surface in her language.

7. See Daniel Cottom, "Austen's Attachments and Supplantments," *Novel* 14:2 (1981), 152–67.

8. Scott's review is dated October 1815 and was issued in March 1816. See Southam, p. 63.

9. Richard Whateley in *Quarterly Review* 24 (Jan. 1821), reprinted in Southam, p. 87.

10. J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961).

11. Watt places the geniuses, of course, in opposition to an "uncritical" and self-indulgent "public."

12. Much of the historical work on the novel in recent years has focused on the texts that Watt's developmental history could not engage: the Gothic and Domestic novels of the late eighteenth century.

13. Watt's Austen is finally of this type: she climaxes one century and mothers the next. As Norman Page has pointed out, F. R. Leavis was another literary historian who had a great need for Austen but did not know what to do with her. See Page, "The Great Tradition Revisited," in *Jane Austen's Achievement,* ed. Juliet McMaster (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), pp. 44–63.

14. T. B. Tomlinson, *The English Middle Class Novel* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), p. 24.

15. Igor Webb points out the social significance of "choice" in Austen in *From Custom to Capital: The English Novel and the Industrial Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 43–44.

16. All quotations from Austen's novels are taken from *The Novels of Jane Austen,* ed. R. W. Chapman, 3d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932, 1933). This quotation is from *Emma,* p. 84. All further references will appear in the text.

17. The surge effectively began with *The Wordsworth Circle* 7:4 (1976), a special issue. In addition to those studies and others cited below, see A. Walton Litz, "*Persuasion:* Forms of Estrangement," in *Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays,* ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 221–34.

18. Joseph Kestner, "Jane Austen: The Tradition of the English Romantic Novel, 1800–1832," *The Wordsworth Circle* 7:4 (1976), 297–311.

19. Susan Morgan, *In the Meantime: Character and Perception in Jane Austen's Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 3, 11.

20. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 6.

21. A. Walton Litz, "'A Development of Self': Character and Personality in Jane Austen's Fiction," in McMaster, *Jane Austen's Achievement,* p. 74.

22. This is the major difficulty in Morgan's useful study. Patricia Spacks suggests

an alternative in her provocative analysis of the "poetics of growth" in "Muted Discord: Generational Conflict in Jane Austen," in *Jane Austen in a Social Context,* ed. David Monaghan (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1981), pp. 159–79.

23. "The history of narrative art since the Romantic period," observes John O. Lyons, "has been in one sense the history of the devices by which writers give the illusion of a real character. The necessity of such an illusion did not occur to earlier ages, and their use of puppets and masks and mirror images suggested an aspect of the character's artistic existence." See Lyons, *The Invention of the Self: The Hinge of Consciousness in the Eighteenth Century* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 226. Also, for a suggestive analysis of how E. H. Gombrich's work on representations of the "real" relates to the concept of genre, see Adena Rosmarin, *The Power of Genre* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 10–22.

24. Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* [1741] and *Shamela* [1742], ed. Martin Battestin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), pp. 7–12.

25. We need to distinguish here between the forms discussed as "high" by the writers of a particular time and those that we, as literary historians, now understand to have been hierarchically dominant. In this case, the latter forms include the satiric and the georgic-descriptive. Thus, in accord with the principle of interrelations, the function of the "high" epic features of Fielding's text was satiric. For a discussion of the eighteenth-century generic hierarchy, see Ralph Cohen, "The Augustan Mode in English Poetry," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 1 (1967), 3–32.

26. For a discussion of order in variety in the eighteenth-century novel, see Eric Rothstein, *Systems of Order and Inquiry in Later Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 1–21.

27. Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* [1747–48], 4 vols., introduction by John Butt (London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1962), I, xiv.

28. See my discussion of *Otranto* in Clifford Siskin, "Wordsworth's Gothic Endeavor: From *Esthwaite* to the Great Decade," *Wordsworth Circle* 10:2 (1979), 161–73.

29. Henry Mackenzie, the *Lounger* no. 20 (18 June 1785), reprinted in *Novel and Romance, 1700–1800: A Documentary Record,* ed. Ioan Williams (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), pp. 328–29.

30. See Watt, pp. 296–97. Also Barbara Hardy, *A Reading of Jane Austen* (London: Peter Owen, 1975), pp. 11–15. This approach does produce some helpful insights; it is the use of Austen as a "solution" that I find problematic.

31. Austen is leaving it to the reader to sympathize ("concern") and to judge; as I have already shown, this is a characteristic Romantic ploy.

32. *Jane Austen's Letters: To Her Sister Cassandra and Others,* ed. R. W. Chapman, 2d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 468–69, 452.

33. Donald Greene, "The Myth of Limitation," in *Jane Austen Today,* ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), p. 166. Drawing distinctions between Fielding and Richardson, as many of their contemporaries did, is not the problem; the difficulty lies in elaborating a literary history out of them.

34. Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780–1880* (London: Routledge, 1969).

35. Dorothy Marshall, *Industrial England, 1776–1851* (New York: Scribner's, 1973), p. 91.

36. See Spacks's discussion of the growth of a literature of growth in "Muted Discord."

37. Cottom discusses the impersonality of the family in "Austen's Attachments," p. 162.

38. See Nancy Armstrong, "The Rise of Feminine Authority in the Novel," *Novel* 15:2 (1982), 127–45.

39. Diana Spearman, *The Novel and Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 37.

40. Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England: From Personal Observation and Authentic Sources,* English ed. (1892; rpt. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), pp. 329, 332.

41. See Coleridge's description of the plan for *Lyrical Ballads* in *Biographia Literaria,* ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), II, 5.

42. These line numbers and those that follow refer to William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850,* ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York: Norton, 1979).

43. For a discussion of the internalization of form in Austen, see Henrietta Ten Harmsel, *Jane Austen: A Study in Fictional Conventions* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), p. 163. Karl Kroeber discusses Romantic "transformations of genre and mode" in "Jane Austen, Romantic," *The Wordsworth Circle* 7:9 (1976), 295.

44. Gene Ruoff offers a very valuable comparison between Austen and Wordsworth in "The Sense of a Beginning: *Mansfield Park,*" *The Wordsworth Circle* 10:2 (1979), 174–86.

45. Unsigned review from *New Monthly Magazine* 95 (May 1852), 17–53, reprinted in Southam, pp. 137–38.

46. G. H. Lewes in *Blackwood's* 86 (1859), reprinted in *Literary Criticism of George Henry Lewes,* ed. Alice R. Kaminsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 92.

47. Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* (New York: Norton, 1957). Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 243–64.

48. See Southam, pp. 117, 126–28.

49. Alistair Duckworth, *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971).

Part Ten

Realism

As THE THEORY of the novel turns its attention to the establishment of the genre in the nineteenth century, the paradox of the novel tradition—hence also the historiography of rupture—becomes more insistent. This is most evident in the way novelistic realism has been theoretically reconceived during the past several decades. Summarizing Roland Barthes's critical method at his transition point between structuralism and poststructuralism, Rosalind Coward and John Ellis provide a succinct account of this reconception. "[L]anguage produces the realist text as natural. . . . Realism naturalizes the arbitrary nature of the sign." In realist discourse, signifier and signified "are treated as equivalents"; alternatively (quoting Derrida), "the signifier seems to be erased or to become transparent." "The business of realist writing is . . . to be the equivalent of a reality, to imitate it." "[R]ealism stresses the product and not the production. . . . all that matters is the illusion, the story, the content." "[T]he reader has to adopt a certain position with regard to the text. This position is that of homogeneity, of truth. . . . The [reading] subject must operate the identity between signifier and signified. . . . [R]eading is a consumption, writing is a purely instrumental use of language."

These passages synoptically engage the broad range of issues raised in the preceding analyses of novelistic discourse, a range I've described (with reference to the grand theorists) in terms of psychological self-consciousness, visual perspective, and linguistic structure. But where the mainstream theory of the novel has consistently emphasized the dialectical duality of novelistic epistemology, its poststructuralist revision insists on the unitary and the partial: not transparency and opacity but transparency alone; not signifier and signified but signified alone; not narrative voice and character voice but narrative voice alone;[1] not objectivity and reflexivity but objectivity alone; not consciousness and self-consciousness but consciousness alone; not means ("instrument") and object of representation but object of representation alone; not parodic imitation and criticism but imitation alone; not form and content but content alone.

The partiality of the poststructuralist account entails a full reconception of the chronological field. Modernity now requires a three-part periodization—proto-realist (Sterne), realist (Balzac), and (modernist) avant-garde (Joyce)—a line whose ends meet as though to emphasize the historical aberrancy of the middle term (thus the well-known family romance in which mod-

1. Coward and Ellis soon qualify the absolute transparency of narration's signification in recognition of the existence of multiple figural viewpoints in the realist novel, but "narration"

ernism claims the suppositious *Tristram Shandy* as its own). Meanwhile, the relationship between modernism and realism[2] is redescribed as though it were that between the novel and epic: "Face to face with this floating, open practice is the dominant mode of writing, a fixity, a process where the reader's role is that of consumer." Similarly, the relationship between traditional, Adamic language doctrine and the early modern, Lockean doctrine of the arbitrary nature of the sign is redescribed as though it were that between (Lockean) realism and (Saussurean) modernism.

In short, the formal qualities of which realism has been evacuated are found to reside securely within its successor. The "naturalizing" strategy poststructuralist theory attributes to realism is turned against realism itself so as to novelize the unique modernity of the twentieth century over against the traditionality of the nineteenth. "Capitalism," the dynamic and protean infrastructure of all modern narrative, may then be specified to commodity fetishism and its putative cultural analogue, realism, which "represses production in the same way that the mechanism of the market, of general exchangeability, represses production in capitalist society."[3]

Addressing the considerable authority of poststructuralism's critique of realism, the following two readings turn to (British) contemporaries to concretize the status of the category in its earliest usages. Michael McKeon suggests situating the emergence of realism within the long rhetorical tradition which held that precept is best taught by example. Realist method is the logical culmination of this tradition because its central premise, probability, involves the economical internalization of precept by example. Early modern attitudes toward how language works precluded the possibility of effacing its constructive function (although the rhetorical trope of no rhetoric was highly valued by rhetoricians). The effort to "naturalize" narrative, to efface its rhetoricity, was briefly sustained not by an emergent realist doctrine but by the claim to historicity, for which truth was coextensive with the transparent facticity of the documentary object. Realist probability replaced historicity because it was better equipped to name and engage the central rhetorical mechanism of exemplarity, its powers of emotional transport.

For contemporaries, the main problem with exemplary teaching was not the epistemological danger of naturalization but the ethical danger of internalization, of self-absorption. "[I]n these writings our sensibility is strongly called forth without any possibility of exerting itself in virtuous action, and those emotions, which we shall never feel again with equal force, are wasted without advantage." By assimilating exemplarity to an emergent aesthetic doctrine,

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remains the unitary window onto "Truth" and the technique of free indirect discourse goes unexamined. Banfield points out that the experience of free indirect discourse enforces precisely the recognition that there exists a "third person point of view" (above, ch. 22).

2. Coward and Ellis rightly recognize that this relationship is not only diachronic but also synchronic: realism and modernism co-exist in modern usage.

3. Apart from the more obvious problems with this specification (on which see below, pt. 12), it's worth remarking here that a Marxist approach to the synchrony of infrastructure and superstructure, of material and cultural production, would be more attentive to its dialectical engagement not only of similarity ("in the same way that") but also of difference.

contemporaries theorized the persuasive power of narrative example as utterly dependent upon our capacity to distinguish it from "real experience." "The willing suspension of disbelief" is the subtle yet definitive marker of this separation between art and life, that "dissonance" whose affirmation, according to Lukács, "in all other genres . . . precedes the act of form-giving, whereas in the novel it is [also] the form itself" (*Theory,* above, pt. 4).

In epistemological terms, the realist internalization of precept within example only sophisticates the anti-naturalizing pedagogy of more traditional exemplarity. Here the gendering of realism as feminine expresses less the reality principle over against male fantasy and romance than the subtle indirection of realist pedagogy, which internalizes precept within example as the domestic pedagogue accommodates the outspoken rationality of the law to the interiority of the domestic virtues. In ethical terms, however, realism subserves the modern separation between the highly rarefied pedagogy of the aesthetic and a politico-ideological "didacticism" whose crude preoccupation with external ends underscores the relative purity and autonomy of aesthetic internalization.

Taking as his province the great texts of Victorian realism, George Levine adopts a recognizably Lukácsian perspective on the mode. Realism "was not a solidly self-satisfied vision based in a misguided objectivity and faith in representation, but a highly self-conscious attempt to explore or create a new reality. Its massive self-confidence implied a radical doubt, its strategies of truth-telling, a profound self-consciousness." Search implies lack, objectivity implies subjectivity—the language of reality implies the separation or detachment of language from reality: realism is "a self-conscious effort . . . to make literature appear to be describing directly not some other language but reality itself (whatever that may be)." Levine's principal strategy in making this argument is similarly dialectical. Nineteenth-century realism, which modern critics tend to treat as a homogeneous and synchronic practice, is in fact a diachronic series of "realisms," a differential chain in which the relative transparency of each succeeding link denaturalizes—renders opaque—the conventionality of its immediate predecessor, hence also the confident integrity of the whole. Moreover each link in the chain encapsulates this larger movement: "What seems clear becomes cloudy as we see more and from different perspectives."

Paradoxically, a similar effect can be achieved starting from the premise of continuity. If (looking backward) "realism" takes in not only Defoe but even metaphysical realism, looking forward it includes "modern critics who define themselves by virtue of their separation from realism." The "continuum" is then not challenged but confirmed by the evidence of an internal progression. As the century continues "there are differences in the rhetorical strategies, suggesting that the stakes were getting higher." With poststructuralism we reach a culminating reversal: the Victorians wrote "with the awareness of the possibilities of indeterminate meaning and of solipsism, but they wrote *against* the very indeterminacy they tended to reveal," and modern criticism to promote. But the reversal is implicit in the empiricism of Victorian practice: "Values are reversed in that the realistic method proceeds to what is not visible," whether "imagination" or "language." What locally seems the discontinuity of reversal may be, from a more distanced perspective, one stage in an ongoing

internalization, "a shift of focus from the large to the small, from the general to the particular": "The mystery lay not beyond phenomena, but in them." Like Siskin,[4] Levine seeks to encompass a transgeneric period discourse. Unlike Siskin's "romanticism," however, Levine's "realism" cannot be fully separated from what precedes it; and for that very reason, the putatively "clear" boundary between romanticism and realism "becomes cloudy."

Why do the classic American novelists call their narratives "romances" rather than "novels"? Although it's susceptible to a number of responses, this question reformulates one first raised for us by structuralist theory, the question of (not the temporal but) the spatial continuity of the genre.[5] What happens to the novel once it's transported from the West European context of its origins and comes to be produced and consumed by other cultures? Can it still be spoken of "as such"? The American terminological shift would seem to say no. Surveying American usage of the term "romance" in the nineteenth century, Michael Davitt Bell distills two basic senses. First of all, "romance" suggests "the unfettered imagination." Early on, its connotations are relatively pejorative: falsity, fantasy, the danger of an especially psychological license that is especially peculiar to impressionable youth. By the time of Henry James's usage, this sense of romance, to some degree detoxified, nonetheless persists as the still-troubling project of an imaginative flight from the actual. Second, Bell cites Nathaniel Hawthorne to represent what he calls the "integrative" or "conservative" reaction to the first sense of the term. Here romance involves a "balance or reconcilation" between imagination and reality, an imaginative latitude with the novelistic canons of "minute fidelity . . . to the probable and ordinary" which yet holds together what the primary sense of the term pulls apart.

Bell helps us situate the conservative sense of balance within the national context, to see the American theory of romance as a theory of American romance. Romance was somehow appropriate to, even "realistic" about, a land where reality itself was felt to be strange, unfamiliar, unknown, "romantic." As Charles Brockden Brown remarked in 1799, "[p]uerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras, are the material" hitherto employed to engage the sympathy of the reader. "The incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness, are far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology."[6] On the other hand, the principle of balance might be felt in the way the imaginative associations brought to America by European settlers colonized the real solidity of the land. In either case, Bell suggests, "the theory of conservative romance" may plausibly be seen as "a theory of realism." In this way, the question of American romance dovetails with the question of American exceptionalism.

Although he is cautiously skeptical about the "equation" of "experimental romance" and "the national experiment," Bell acknowledges a powerful analogy: "[T]he central problem of the new nation, like the central problem of romance, was one of expression, of finding valid words and forms for other-

4. See above, ch. 25.

5. See above, pt. 2, esp. Lévi-Strauss, "How Myths Die."

6. Preface to *Edgar Huntly* (1799), quoted in Richard Ruland, ed., *The Native Muse: Theories of American Literature from Bradford to Whitman* (New York: Dutton, 1976), 64.

wise inarticulate sentiments." How can the analogy be concretized? One possibility is that romance and America are tied by "a theoretical repudiation of form altogether": "In romance as in revolution, 'our common nature' was to be liberated from imprisoning form."[7] Another is that "the form of romance itself," its "self-conscious investigation of literary expression," is allied to its dominant content, the "investigation of the nature and meaning of 'America.'"[8] Most striking in the present context is the way these speculations on the theory of American romance evoke the European theory of the novel—its relative formlessness, its reflexive coordination of form and content.[9] Are American exceptionalism and American romance to be understood, like the idea of a "novel tradition," according to the paradoxical logic of modernity? Is American romance the spatial equivalent, as it were, of European modernism?

7. Here romance, contrary to Frye's structuralist view, is not the (relatively undisplaced) "place" of conventional form but its denial (see above, ch. 8).

8. Compare Anderson's alliance of the novel and the modern nation (above, ch. 16).

9. Romance in the traditional sense of the term has therefore undergone a sea change in becoming the American romance of the nineteenth century, which, like romanticism, might be understood as a "sentimental" revision of the traditional mode (in Schiller's sense of the sentimental: see above, n. 13 of headnote to pt. 8).

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Rosalind Coward and John Ellis

From Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject

S/Z AIMS TO demonstrate how language produces the realist text as natural. It examines not the structure of the text but its structuration. The text is seen as a productivity of meaning which is carried on within a certain regime of sense: realism. The productivity of language which is dramatically revealed in the unconscious and in *avant-garde* texts is given a fixity, a positionality, so that it functions to "denote" a "reality." Thus realism is more than a "natural attitude," it is a practice of signification which relies upon the limits that society gives itself: certain realist texts, like the novella analyzed in *S/Z* are consequently capable of dramatizing these limits at certain moments.

Initially, Barthes expresses this new perception of the text by reformulating the distinction *écriture/écrivance.* He bases it on the "practice of writing" (Barthes, *S/Z,* p. 3) in which realism is the normal mode, submitted to the need to represent. He speaks of "writable" texts (the translation, unhelpfully, has "writerly"): those texts that "make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text": the texts of the *avant-garde* which deconstruct language. Face to face with this floating, open practice is the dominant mode of writing, a fixity, a process where the reader's role is that of consumer, able only to "accept or reject the text." This is the area of classic realist texts, the normal mode of writing. It is none the less possible to see that they are based on a certain, limited plurality of language, and it is precisely the task of *S/Z* to reveal this plurality, "to appreciate what plural constitutes it" (*S/Z,* p. 5), as well as the closures of plurality which make possible its discourse. Some texts rely on the moment of closure more than others. Some veer toward the mere repetition of sociolects, but even these rely to some degree upon the productivity of language merely in order to function as a realist text. Barthes sees the liberating function of a criticism that shows the production of meaning at work in the realist text itself. Conventional criticism aims at a closure of the troubling plurality: it aims at an interpretation, fixing a meaning, finding a source (the author) and an ending, a closure (*the* meaning). This form of criticism plays the game that the text proposes: that the text is nothing except what it can denote

or describe and the rhetorical grace with which it can do so. Barthes's liberatory criticism intends to discover what the rules of this game are (for writers and readers), in order to enter into a more serious and vital play to find ideology out in the moment that it is produced.

To found this liberatory criticism, Barthes produces a "slow-motion" reading of a text which is set within the realist form. It is formed by Balzac's aesthetic in which "the art of literature is composed of two distinct parts: observation—expression" (*Comédie humaine* XI); the act of writing is the mere transcription of what has been observed. Yet at the same time, this particular text dramatizes the limits of the realist form by introducing elements that question its whole basis: the text in question is *Sarrasine,* a novella written in 1830, concerning a castrato. The narrator is at a party given by the *nouveau riche* Lanty family. The woman who accompanied him has a brush with a mysterious debilitated old man, who is treated with exaggerated care by the family. The narrator undertakes to tell her the story of this character, in exchange for a night with her. It is the story of a sculptor, Sarrasine, who falls in love with Zambinella, a famous singer in Rome. Eventually, he can no longer avoid the fact that "she" is a castrato: and he is murdered by the henchmen of the Cardinal who protects him/her. This castrato is the old man, whose singing was the source of the family's wealth. In horror at this unnatural tale, the woman refuses the narrator. Even in this brief summary, the troubling is reproduced: there is no "neuter" personal pronoun; the castrato is a physical fact that unsettles sexual categorization.

Sarrasine is a "limit-text" of realism, a text which uses all the mechanisms of realism to produce a narrative which dramatizes its very founding presuppositions. So, basing his aesthetic on the practice of writing (*écriture*), Barthes reveals realism as a social practice of representation which exploits the plurality of language in a limited way. It is a practice that has its own sociolects, a form which can generate texts which dramatize their own limits, a form that can be rebuffed by texts of unveiling, hesitation and productivity.

To understand *S/Z* as anything other than a superior formal method (and every indication is that this is how it has been received in Britain), it is necessary to understand what linguistic and ideological practices produce these various kinds of text. We must first understand the relation between realism and the plurality of language.

First, realism stresses the product and not the production. It represses production in the same way that the mechanism of the market, of general exchangeability, represses production in capitalist society. It does not matter where a product comes from, how it was made, by whom or for what purpose it was intended. All that matters is its value measured against the general medium of exchange, money. In the same way, it does not matter that realism is produced by a certain use of language, by a complex production; all that matters is the illusion, the story, the content. What we value is its truth to life, the accuracy of its vision. We do not read Agatha Christie or John Braine for the productivity of their language, we read for the story, the impression we produce of a real world. When we pay attention to the "style" of writers like Raymond Chandler or Len Deighton, it is because this style produces the

illusion of a character: the hard-boiled individualist using his limited powers against a social system he does not fully understand. We do not look at the production, but the product; hence the shock of reading an unusual book like *S/Z,* which goes against the "natural" way of reading realist texts, and looks precisely at the way in which the illusion is produced. It treats realism as an effect of language, and not language as a (rhetorical) effect of realism.

This repression of production takes place because realism has as its basic philosophy of language not a production (signification being the production of a signified through the action of the signifying chain), but an identity: the signifier is treated as identical to a (pre-existent) signified. The signifier and signified are not seen as caught up together in a process of production, they are treated as equivalents: the signifier is merely the equivalent of its pre-established concept. It seems as though it is not the business of language to establish this concept, but merely to express or communicate it. "Not only do signifier and signified seem to unite, but in this confusion, the signifier seems to be erased or to become transparent so as to let the concept present itself, just as if it were referring to nothing but its own presence" (Derrida, *Positions,* pp. 32–3). Language is treated as though it stands in for, is identical with, the real world. The business of realist writing is, according to its philosophy, to be the equivalent of a reality, to imitate it. This "imitation" is the basis of realist literature, and its technical name is *mimesis,* mimicry. The whole basis of mimesis is that writing is a mere transcription of the real, carrying it over into a medium that exists only as a parasitic practice because the word is identical to, the equivalent of, the real world. Realism naturalizes the arbitrary nature of the sign; its philosophy is that of an identity between signifier and signified on the level of an entire text as much as that of a single word.

There are many texts which question this instrumentalist view of language, some written even when it was first being established. A crucial part of the attempt by the emergent bourgeoisie to establish its hegemony in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the creation of several institutions of language. In England, there was the Royal Society with its official, "scientific," philosophy of language, as well as the institutions of journalism and the novel, etc. Swift satirized instrumentalism with his vision of people carrying round literal objects with which to converse (*Gulliver's Travels*), and Sterne, in *Tristram Shandy* (1759–66), unmasked its presuppositions in play. His comedy consists of taking the realist form too seriously, at its face value. He forces its claims of "fidelity to reality," "mirroring reality" to their absurd conclusion. For instance, he attempts to equate the time taken to read a passage with the time it took in reality to carry the action forward to the next episode (vol. IX, chs. 17–20). In direct contrast these chapters are followed by the briefest possible mention of a set of actions, a mere signaling: "My uncle Toby's map is carried down into the kitchen," which comprises a whole chapter (vol. IX, ch. 27).

But the challenge to mimesis is carried on almost at a deeper level, the level at which the troubling of *Sarrasine* occurs. *Tristram Shandy* is concerned with what it cannot speak both because of censorship and the nature of realist language: sexuality and castration. The book begins, logically according to the

realist schema, with the first appearance of the central character: that is, with his conception. This account of *coitus interruptus* is obscure only because the text cannot in all propriety name what act is taking place. But the real problem that the book has is not so much sexuality as castration, the same problem as *Sarrasine.* Uncle Toby received a wound "in the groin" whose exact nature intrigues many; and he himself devotes much of his time to dramatizing the moment of this castration in his war-game. Tristram had his nose flattened, a statement whose overt meaning is constantly subverted by the presence of sexual puns on the word "nose," like Slawkenbergius's Tale, a discourse from outside that opens vol. IV. The book plays on castration as a lack it cannot name if it is to comply with the canons of decency. It employs the constant metaphors to which it must resort to express castration as a perpetual undermining of realist language's claim to imitate. In *Tristram Shandy* this realist language becomes treacherous, the signifier is no longer linked to the signified in a relationship of identity. There is a constant sliding of signifiers; substitution, relationships of metaphor; a dissolution of the realist signifier—signified equivalence. The attempts at exact, detailed description try to restore this equivalence, but finally they confirm its impossibility. *Tristram Shandy* thus plays with mimesis, attempting to give a full and accurate picture of reality, but instead showing up the repressed area of production of meaning.

Its way of doing this is distinct from *Sarrasine. Tristram Shandy* is obsessed with convention, with the correct way of behaving and of writing. With *Sarrasine,* seventy years later, the realist convention is no longer visible as a convention; it has become natural, identical with reality. So anything that disturbs its naturalness, its ability to imitate the real, inevitably disturbs that real as much as its instrumental language. For *Tristram Shandy,* realist language is still visible as a convention (the desirable way of writing rather than natural). The comedy of the book is thus to show the inadequacy of conventions (social and literary) in the face of a multiple reality that cannot be fully comprehended. Without this element of play, Sterne lapses into the dominant mode for expressing the incomprehensibility of reality: sentimentalism (*A Sentimental Journey,* etc.). Balzac's habitual mode is the fully fledged language of realism, the language of mastery, of the "science of reality" as he described it.

The identity between signifier and signified which is established in realist writing is the precondition of its ability to represent a *vraisemblable,* an accepted natural view of the world. It does not mean that all writing is absolutely transparent, but rather that the narration, the dominant discourse, is able to establish itself as Truth. The narration does not appear to be the voice of an author; its source appears to be a true reality which speaks. The value of other discourses in the text (the speech of various characters, descriptions of subjective processes, etc.) is measured against this voice of truth. Thus a general evaluation of the discourses of the writing is established. The absolute value is that of reality itself, and the discourse of the narration attains this through the creation of an identity between signifier and signified. The other discourses of the text then contain varying degrees of truth or even none at all. Through this position of dominance, based on its equivalence with reality, the narration can then attribute points of origin for subsidiary discourses, ap-

pearing itself to have a point of origin in reality. So fragments of writing are confidently attributable to one character or another. And as we shall see with the analysis of *S/Z,* the narration also establishes the basic positionality for these characters, by setting up antithetical oppositions between them, creating a system of mutually defining, separated spaces.

The realist narrative functions to uncover a world of truth, a world without contradictions, a homogeneous world of appearance supported by essences. But as Stephen Heath has pointed out in his seminal analysis of the film *Touch of Evil,* the process of narration is itself necessarily a statement of contradiction and heterogeneity: although the narrative-as-product displays a harmonious world of reality, the process of unfolding is the continuous statement of contradiction which will be more or less closed at the end.

> The beginning of the narrative action depends on a violence as interruption, as the violation of a state of homogeneity . . . the point of the action, the goal of its advance, is the recovery of homogeneity according to a movement of reconvergence—reinvestment which, precisely, realigns, contains the violence anew. (Heath, no. 2, ibid p. 91)

> The paradox of such a narrative is then this: aimed at containment, it restates heterogeneity as the constant term of its action—if there is symmetry, there is dissymmetry, if there is resolution, there is violence; it contains as one contains an enemy, holding in place but defensively. (Ibid., no. 1, p. 49)

It is this movement of process and of opening that *S/Z* attempts to capture in its analysis of the structuration of the text.

This process of narration, a process that opens and closes with homogeneity, depends on "the inscription of the subject as the place of its intelligibility" (ibid., no. 2, p. 98). The whole process is directed toward the place of a reader: in order that it should be intelligible, the reader has to adopt a certain position with regard to the text. This position is that of homogeneity, of truth. The narration calls upon the subject to regard the process of the narrative as a provisional openness, dependent upon the closure which the subject expects as the very pre-condition of its pleasure. In order that the narrative is intelligible at all, it is necessary that the subject regards the discourse of narration as the discourse of the unfolding of truth. The subject must operate the identity between signifier and signified, and as we shall see, the construction of the subject as homogeneous in ideology places it in an imaginary position of transcendence to this system. So the subject is constructed in such a way that it is not questioned by the flux of the text (something that is regarded as an "aberrant reaction"); neither is it thrown into process by the sliding of signifiers which disestablish social positionality, as with the *avant-garde* text. Narration rather sets the subject in place as the point of intelligibility of its activity: the subject is then in a position of observation, understanding, synthesizing. The subject of narration is a homogeneous subject, fixed in a relation of watching. It is precisely this relationship of specularity that becomes clear in the analysis of films, hence the importance of magazines like *Screen* which analyze narration in the cinema and the positions for the subject that it includes.

Texts which do not depend on placing the subject in this kind of position are as rare in the cinema as in literature itself. For reasons of convenience, we shall confine our account to literature, where a text like Joyce's *Ulysses* appears at certain points to be creating "that breach of the 'I' [exhibited in] the explosion of modern literature: a plurality of languages, a confrontation of types of discourse and ideologies, with no conclusions and no synthesis—without 'monological' or axial points" (Kristeva, *Twentieth Century Studies,* no 7–8, p. 111). In the "Nighttown" sequence of *Ulysses* (Penguin ed., pp. 425–532), this lack of positionality takes the form of a dramatization: the theatrical form is appropriate because the positions of realist language become a performance, they are shown as arbitrary, shifting and confusable roles. The names which "utter" discourses are not origins, they are no more than points that are criss-crossed by discourses that are no longer stratified. Hence the descriptions of characters are constantly changing; fantasies of total power, abasement, sexuality, Samaritanism, etc., move with expressions of repressed elements: guilt, obscenities, everyday exchanges, oratory, songs, political, medical and academic discourse; revision of previous "points of view"; catalogues of disparate items and names. It is no longer possible for the reading subject to establish a comparative valuation of these discourses according to the points which utter them, and the positions they express. Bloom changes shape, sex and appearance so often that even the illusion of a physical presence as the ultimate grounding point of a character completely disappears. What the "Nighttown" sequence does is to dramatize the production of positions in language, showing them to be woven of multiple contradictions.

Thus realism has two basic features: mimesis, the imitation of reality based on fixing the signifier/signified identity, and the stratification of discourses around this which set the subject in the place of mastery. But these mechanisms take place over a multitude of different texts, and are supported by a practice of reading and writing. So how does realism find its social hold, how does it appear multiple and always changing, as the immediate "spontaneous" mode of writing and reading? The practice of reading and writing are determined by the widest forms of behavior, the basic attitude of capitalist society: reading is a consumption, writing is a purely instrumental use of language. Reading as consumption presupposes that the text is read once, for its imitation of reality: "re-reading is an operation contrary to the commercial and ideological habits of our society which would have us "throw away" the story once it has been consumed ('devoured'), so that one can move on to another story, buy another book" (*S/Z,* p. 15). This reading pays a certain attention to the text, because some discourses, some pieces of information, indicate themselves as incidental, as the confirmation of the illusion: messages "whose very gratuitousness serves to authenticate the fiction by what is called the reality effect" (*S/Z,* p. 182). *Tristram Shandy* draws attention to this, but only once, as persistence would endanger the text's whole game with mimesís: "How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? I told you in it, *That my mother was not a papist*" (vol. 1, ch. 20). An argument ensues between Shandy and this inattentive reader; she is sent back to re-read the chapter, because, we are told whilst she does so, "'Tis to rebuke a vicious taste, which

has crept into thousands besides herself,—of reading straight forwards, more in quest of the adventures, than of the deep erudition and knowledge which a book of this cast, if read over as it should be, would infallibly impair with them." The information could only have been gleaned by drawing out all the implications of each remark and not following the narrative onward, for it is contained in "the last line but one of the chapter, where I take upon me to say, 'It was *necessary* I should be born before I was christened.' Had my mother, Madam, been a Papist, that consequence did not follow." A footnote is needed to elucidate the theological nicety involved.

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27

Michael McKeon

From Prose Fiction: Great Britain

According to Hugh Blair, "the wisest men in all ages have more or less employed fables and fictions, as the vehicles of knowledge. These have ever been the basis of both epic and dramatic poetry. It is not, therefore, the nature of this sort of writing, considered in itself, but the faulty manner of its execution, that can expose it to any contempt" (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* [1783], Williams, pp. 247–8). "It is owing, no doubt, to the weakness of human nature," wrote James Beattie, "that fable should ever have been found a necessary, or a convenient, vehicle for truth." Beattie analyzed this strategy as a mode of historical, moral, or political "allegory" evident in the writings of both ancients and moderns, like Swift and Bunyan (*On Fable and Romance* [1783], Williams, pp. 309, 310–18). A century earlier, the most influential modern treatise on romance had associated it with this same strategy: "The first Occasion of Introducing *Romance* into the World, was, without Dispute, to mollify the Rigour of Precepts, by the Allurements of Example" (Pierre Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches, *History of Romances* [1670, trans. 1715], Williams, p. 43).

Protestant thought sought to improve "moral allegory" by making its "fable" or "example" more concrete and substantial. In John Bunyan's eyes, this was the novel "method" of *The Pilgrim's Progress* ([1678, 1682], I, "Author's Apology," l. 31, p. 1; see McKeon, *Origins,* pp. 75–6, 295–7). When Defoe undertook to reform the traditional technique of catechizing children, he replaced abstract doctrine by casuistical stories or domestic "cases": "The Way I have taken for this, is *intirely new,* and at first *perhaps* it may appear something *odd,* and the method may be contemned." But if "this mean and familiar Method, should, by its Novelty, prevail, this will be a happy Undertaking" (*Family Instructor* [1715], pp. 8, 9). Five years later Defoe defended *Robinson Crusoe* in similar terms, as a "fable" that needs to be "moralized": for "the fable is always made for the moral, not the moral for the fable" (*Serious Reflections,* sig. A2r).

As these passages will suggest, the maxim that morals (or precepts) are best taught through fables (or examples) was a commonplace in eighteenth-century novel theory. Eliza Haywood thought the romancers of the previous age had "found it most proper to cloath Instruction with Delight." By this means, "Precepts . . . steal themselves into the Soul . . . We become virtuous ere we are aware, and by admiring the great Examples which in the Narrative appear so amiable, are led to an Endeavour of imitating them" (*The Tea-Table* [1725], Williams, p. 84). Setting the familiar Horatian categories in instrumen-

tal relation, Clara Reeve observed that mid-century novelists had "tempered the *utile* with the *dulce,* and under the disguise of Novels, gave examples of virtue rewarded, and vice punished" (*Progress of Romance,* II, p. 41). According to John Hawkesworth, "precept becomes more forcible and striking as it is connected with example. Precept gains only the cold approbation of reason, and compels an assent which judgment frequently yields with reluctance, even when delay is impossible: but by example the passions are roused . . . the affections are drawn out into the field: they learn their exercise in a mock fight, and are trained for the service of virtue" (*Adventurer,* 16 [30 Dec. 1752], Williams, pp. 196–7). Novelistic example is accessible because it is a mode of knowledge that requires no knowledge. "To follow the chain of perplexed ratiocination . . . or weigh the merits of opposite hypotheses, requires perspicacity, and presupposes learning. Works of this kind, therefore, are not so well adapted to the generality of readers as familiar and colloquial composition; for few can reason, but all can feel, and many who cannot enter into an argument may yet listen to a tale." Indeed, novels "teach us to think, by inuring us to feel" (John and Anna Laetitia [Barbauld] Aikin, *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse* [1773], Williams, pp. 281, 282, see also p. 240).

When Haywood began publishing *The Female Spectator,* she promised her readers access to public news, a promise for which she was soon berated by one of her correspondents:

> Tho' I never had any very great Opinion of your Sex as Authors, yet I thought, whenever you set up for such, you had Cunning enough to confine yourselves within your own Sphere, or at least not to raise the Expectations of the Public by such *mountainous* Promises as you have done . . . Are you not under most terrible Apprehensions that . . . you should be taken for an idle, prating, gossiping old Woman, fit only to tell long Stories by the Fireside for the Entertainment of little Children or Matrons, more antiquated than yourself?

Haywood defended herself against this charge of the female triviality of stories by defending their pedagogic seriousness. "Many little Histories, it is true, are interspers'd, but then they are only such as serve to enforce *Precept* by *Example* . . . it was necessary to engage the Attention of those I endeavoured to reform, by giving them such Things as I knew would please them: Tales, and little Stories to which every one might flatter themselves with being able to find a Key, seemed to me the most effectual Method . . . For this End it was I chose to assume the Name of the *Female Spectator* rather than that of *Monitor,* as thinking the latter by discovering too plainly my Design, might in a great Measure have frustrated it with the Gay and Unreflecting" (*Female Spectator* [1744–6], II, pp. 118, 120, 125, 362–3; see I, p. 80). Haywood does not dismiss the association of stories with women. Rather, she revalues both by arguing the pedagogical utility of appearing to be without pedagogical design. By the same token, the "feminine" character of the novel form lies in its deceptive indirection, its easy access to the "female" realm of concrete affective example as the most dependable if stealthy route to the "male" realm of abstract rational precept.

Only the latest in a long history of forms that teach precept by example,

novels none the less improve upon tradition in the closeness with which their examples are accommodated to our experience; in Congreve's words, they "come near us, and represent to us Intrigues in practice" ("Preface" to *Incognita* [1691], Williams, p. 27). The claim to historicity appealed to contemporaries in part because its concentration of this sort of proximity into a species of virtual "presence" seemed greatly to enhance the novel's pedagogic powers. As Arabella, the female Quixote, protests to her Doctor, "he that writes without Intention to be credited, must write to little Purpose; for what Pleasure or Advantage can arise from Facts that never happened? What Examples can be afforded by the Patience of those who never suffered, or the Chastity of those who were never solicited?" (Lennox, *The Female Quixote* [1752], Bk. IX, ch. 11, Williams, p. 185). But the claim to historicity was fraught with difficulties. If, to moral ends, we narrate what really happens, we cannot avoid (such is the world) narrating immorality. In the claim to historicity that prefaces *Moll Flanders* (1722), Defoe acknowledged (not only the epistemological, but also) the moral necessity of selectiveness: "some of the vicious part of her Life, which could not be modestly told, is quite left out, and several other Parts are very much shortened" (Williams, p. 75). But Defoe also wrestled mightily with the moral contradiction of making a false claim to historicity—of claiming for moral purposes that Moll Flanders was a real person—and by the middle of the century, most people were likely to agree with Godwin: "I ask not, as a principal point, whether it be true or false? My first enquiry is, 'Can I derive instruction from it?'" ("Of History and Romance," p. 367).[1]

However, jettisoning the claim to historicity did not solve the problem of selectiveness. As Johnson famously affirmed, the accessibility of novelistic example, its sheer proximity to us, entails both a pedagogic promise and a pedagogic danger:

> [T]hese familiar histories may perhaps be made of greater use than the solemnities of professed morality, and convey the knowledge of vice and virtue with more efficacy than axioms and definitions. But if the power of example is so great, as to take possession of the memory by a kind of violence, and produce effects almost without the intervention of the will, care ought to be taken, that when the choice is unrestrained, the best examples only should be exhibited . . . It is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art, to imitate nature; but it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature, which are most proper for imitation. . . . (*Rambler,* 4 [31 Mar. 1750], Williams, p. 144)

It is this dilemma to which *Pamela*'s title-page alludes in characterizing what follows as "a Narrative which has its Foundation in TRUTH and NATURE; and at the same time . . . is intirely divested of all those Images, which, in too many Pieces calculated for Amusement only, tend to *inflame* the Minds they should *instruct*" (see Richardson, *Pamela,* p. 1).

In its most extreme form, the problem may extend beyond even the imperative of moral selection. Novelistic example may be so powerfully seductive in its appeal that, however cleansed, it tends to usurp the place of precept altogether. Bunyan had warned his readers against "*playing with the* out-side *of my Dream*" (*Pilgrim's Progress* [1678, 1682], I, "Conclusion," l. 8, p. 134). Rich-

ardson discouraged all prospective readers who might "*dip* into" *Clarissa,* "expecting a *light Novel,* or *transitory Romance;* and look upon Story . . . as its *sole end,* rather than as a vehicle to the Instruction" (Preface to *Clarissa* [1751], Williams, p. 167). Haywood might well indict the hostile reader of *The Female Spectator* of precisely this error, of neglecting the precept for the example. Yet by 1810, Barbauld was content to say that "when I take up a novel, my end and object is entertainment" ("On the Origin and Progress of Novel-Writing," prefixed to *The British Novelists* [1810], I, p. 46, Taylor, p. 112). Is this because the novel had by now learned fully to "internalize" instruction within entertainment, reason within feeling, precept within example? Beattie's historical account of narrative pedagogy as a matter of the "allegorical" signification of "truth" by "fable" seems so sweeping that it comes as some surprise that this signifying structure should appear to collapse once he arrives at modernity and the novel, in which "we attend only to the events that are before us . . . when I read *Robinson Crusoe,* or *Tom Jones,* I attend singly to the narrative; and no key is necessary to make me comprehend the author's meaning" (*On Fable and Romance* [1783], Williams, p. 318). Is this because "meaning" has been successfully incorporated into "narrative" as "truth" into "fable"? Or has the novel so embraced its exemplary access that the pedagogical precept has somehow been left behind?

Championed as an improved method of teaching precept by example, the novel succeeded so well that it turned the tension that had been contained by that maxim into an explicit competition between precept and example, "morality" and "naturalness." There is some justice in seeing the conflict between morality and naturalness as the central problem in novel theory at this time; certainly it controlled the terms of the rivalry between Richardson and Fielding during the 1740s (see McKeon, *Origins,* pp. 410–7). The debate blossomed over important matters of novelistic technique like poetic justice or "mixed" characters. Is moral precept best conveyed when characters are drawn with a purity that is perspicuous but experientially unnatural, or when they are drawn as a mixture that is lifelike but ethically obscure? However, the rivalry between Richardson and Fielding was also crucial in the development of an attempted solution to the conflict between morality and naturalness.

Although early novelistic narrative was dominated by the claim to historicity, it also partook of a standard of truth-telling alternative to the empirical. Especially in France, where experimentation with the "anti-romance" possibilities of romance was most inventive, the claim to historicity often coexisted uneasily with the doctrine of *vraisemblance,* translated as "verisimilitude" and conceived as a quasi-Aristotelian mode of "probability" (see McKeon, *Origins,* pp. 54–5, 59). The well-known Preface to Delarivier Manley's *Secret History of Queen Zarah* (1705)—recently found to be copied from a French source[2]—aptly distinguished between "True History" and "the Probability of Truth" without clearly associating the narrative that followed with either (Williams, p. 34).

Richardson's first novel ostentatiously claimed epistolary historicity. But it also featured an antagonist who knows that the truth of history depends

entirely on "the Light you put Things in," and whose ultimate "belief" in Pamela's "pretty Novel" is less an acceptance of its strict historicity than an acknowledgment that "you have touch'd me sensibly with your mournful Relation" (Richardson, *Pamela* [1740], pp. 201, 207, 208). The "Editor's" preface to volume III of *Clarissa* (1748) admitted the fictionality of its epistolary form (Williams, p. 124), although Richardson soon wished "that the *Air* of Genuineness had been kept up, tho' I want not the letters to be *thought* genuine; only so far kept up, I mean, as that they should not prefatically be owned *not* to be genuine: and this for fear of weakening their Influence where any of them are aimed to be exemplary: as well as to avoid hurting that kind of Historical Faith which Fiction itself is generally read with, tho' we know it to be Fiction" (Richardson to Warburton, 19 Apr. 1748, in Carroll, *Selected Letters,* p. 85). This is not far from Fielding's famous claim that *Joseph Andrews* (1742) is a "true history" because in it "I describe not men, but manners; not an individual, but a species" (III, 1, pp. 159, 161), or from his anonymous supporter's remark concerning this "probable" story that "'twas thought necessary, to give it a greater Air of Truth, to entitle it *an History*" (*Essay on the New Species of Writing* [1751], Williams, p. 153). By 1783 the claim to historicity was becoming obsolete, a dead convention: although novelists "study to make their inventions probable, they do not even pretend that they are true: at least, what they may pretend in this way is considered only as words of course, to which nobody pays any regard" (Beattie, *On Fable and Romance,* Williams, p. 309). The claim to historicity became moribund at the same time as the decline in the epistolary mode of propounding an "objectively" external narration.

Was probability understood as a mechanism for internalizing instruction within entertainment, reason within feeling, precept within example? To some degree: in contrast to romance, at least, novelistic probability was commonly conceived as a constraint upon the latter elements in the service of the former. "The Novel, though it bears a nearer resemblance to truth, has yet less power of entertainment; for it is confined within the narrower bounds of probability"; the novel "is shackled with a thousand restraints; is checked in her most rapid progress by the barriers of reason; and bounded in her most excursive flights by the limits of probability" (Hawkesworth, *Adventurer,* 4 [18 Nov. 1752], Canning, *Microcosm,* 26 [14 May 1787]: Williams, pp. 193, 341). But how do the constraints of a probabilistic "naturalness" affect the teaching of "morality"?

To answer this question we must first observe that contemporaries recognized two different sorts of probability, which might be called "external" and "internal" probability (for a full discussion see Patey, *Probability,* ch. 5). In the first instance, reference is made to the correspondence between fictional action or characterization and real experience as we know it. It is in this sense that Charles Gildon found Defoe's account of Robinson Crusoe "not very probable"; that Richardson and his critics debated the "probability" of Lovelace's character; and that in his portrait of Squire Allworthy, Fielding was credited with having "soberly restrained himself within the bounds of probability" (*Epistle to Daniel Defoe* [1719], *Gentleman's Magazine,* 19 [July 1749], Murphy, intro. to *Works of Henry Fielding* [1762], Williams, pp. 61, 139–40, 257). Radcliffe's effect of the "explained supernatural," whereby Gothic terror is achieved

while remaining "within the limits of nature and probability," is similarly a case of external probability (*Monthly Review,* 2d ser., 15 (Nov. 1794), Williams, p. 393).[3]

Richard Payne Knight discriminated this sense of probability from internal (or "poetical") probability:

> [T]hat sort of semblance to truth, which . . . we will call *poetical probability,* does not arise so much from the resemblance of the fictions to real events, as from the consistence of the language with the sentiments, of the sentiments and actions with the characters, and of the different parts of the fable, with each other: for, if the mind be deeply interested . . . it will never turn aside to any extraneous matter for rules of comparison; but judge of the probability of the events merely by their connection with, and dependence upon each other. (*Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* [1805], p. 267)

By this more strictly Aristotelian standard, Knight (p. 283) found the impossibilities of *Gulliver's Travels* more probable than the possible plot of *Clarissa.* Fielding had made a similar distinction when he argued that "the Actions should be such as may not only be within the Compass of human Agency, and which human Agents may probably be supposed to do; but they should be likely for the very Actors and Characters themselves to have performed" (*Tom Jones* [1749], VIII, i; I, p. 405). Invoking the theory of another, older genre, Fielding identified this principle as "what the dramatic Critics call Conservation of Character." It is in this spirit of internal probability that a reader of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) thought Valancourt's "disgraceful indiscretions" uncharacteristic and therefore "*unnatural*"; that a reader of *Pamela* deemed crucial Pamela's service to Mr. B.'s mother: "for if she had always remain'd a Fellow-cottager with her Father, it must have carried an Air of Romantick Improbability to account for her polite Education"; that readers praised Richardson and Smollett for an epistolary mode that precisely distinguished among a host of letter-writers by correlating with each a style "excellently adapted to the character of the writer" (*Monthly Review,* 2d ser., 15 [Nov. 1794], prefaces to *Pamela* [1740], *Gentleman's Magazine,* 19 [July 1749]: Williams, pp. 394–5, 114, 135).

"Conservation of character" partakes of the more general Aristotelian principle of unity of action, which requires that plots proceed with probability and necessity. Godwin makes this connection when he asserts that it is really "romance" (i.e., fiction) that is "true history." Unlike history-writing, which must be responsible to the ultimate unknowability of external experience, romance is able to achieve the consistency of internal probability, "showing how character increases and assimilates new substances to its own, and how it decays, together with the catastrophe into which by its own gravity it naturally declines" ("Of History and Romance" [composed 1797], p. 372). This does not contradict Godwin's grounding political tenet that "The Characters of Men Originate in Their External Circumstances" (*Enquiry* [1793], I, iv, chapter heading). It recapitulates that tenet in the analogous but distinct sphere of fictional activity (see Kelly, *English,* pp. 15–16).

External probability concerns the reflection of reality by fiction; internal

probability reconceives this concern as an autonomous structural principle internal to fiction itself. Modern doctrines of realism are fed by both species of probability. Although internal probability is an "ancient," because Aristotelian, principle, modern theory could rediscover and embrace its revolutionary formalism only when the ground had been thoroughly prepared by the discourse of external probability and the claim to historicity (see McKeon, *Origins,* pp. 119–20). Of course, the formal sophistication of internal probability disregards the accountability of fiction to external experience. Does it follow that this effort at "naturalness" must also undermine fiction's efforts at an externally effective "morality"? Perhaps not; still, some contemporaries thought much current fiction did indeed discourage the mechanism through which novelistic "example" was driven and justified by moral "precept."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN to say that novels "teach us to think, by inuring us to feel"? The association between the novel and its reader's emotional transport had been gathering momentum from Richardson onward. But many commentators recognized that if a transported reader is to remain morally thoughtful and responsible, she or he must also be a detached and active reader (see Bartolomeo, pp. 34, 127). One effect of the cult of sensibility was to sensitize commentators to the way the circuit between feeling and thought, example and precept, fictional distress and active moral response, could be shorted out by the very textual pleasures that were supposed to complete it.

"In the enthusiasm of sentiment there is much the same danger as in the enthusiasm of religion, of substituting certain impulses and feelings of what may be called a visionary kind, in the place of real practical duties, which, in morals, as in theology, we might not improperly denominate good works." "But in these writings our sensibility is strongly called forth without any possibility of exerting itself in virtuous action, and those emotions, which we shall never feel again with equal force, are wasted without advantage." "I am afraid lest the same eye which is so prone to give its tributary tear to the well-told history of fancied woe, should be able to look upon real misery without emotion, because its tale is told without plot, incident, or ornament." "Young people are all imitation, and when a girl assumes the pathos of Clarissa without experiencing the same afflictions, or being put to the same trials, the result will be a most insufferable affectation and pedantry." "I have actually seen mothers, in miserable garrets, *crying for the imaginary distress of an heroine*, while their children were *crying for bread*" (MacKenzie, *Lounger,* 20 [18 June 1785], J. and A. L. Aikin [Barbauld], *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse* [1773], Monroe, *Olla Podrida,* 15 [23 June 1787], Cumberland, *Observer,* 27 [1785]: Williams, pp. 330, 289, 350, 335; *Sylph* 5 [6 Oct. 1795], pp. 35–6, Taylor, p. 53). On the evidence of these passages, contemporaries discovered simultaneously the Aristotelian doctrine of catharsis, and the Brechtian insight that catharsis militates against, by substituting for, moral behavior.

Like probability, the renovated doctrine of catharsis made a vital contribution to the eighteenth-century theory of realism. Realism may be understood as that branch of the emergent notion of aesthetic autonomy that had

reference to imaginative productions, like prose narratives, that appeared most directly implicated in the sphere of real experience. To some degree, of course, all aesthetic objects were understood to be so implicated. From Addison through Burke and beyond, commentators had been increasingly preoccupied with the apparent fact that the pleasure we take in aesthetic experience is dependent upon, yet absent from, the real experience of what that art depicts—that aesthetic experience therefore must come close, but not too close, to real experience. Coleridge made the case specifically for prose fiction:

> The merit of a novellist is in direct proportion . . . to the *pleasurable* effect which he produces. Situations of torment, and images of naked horror, are easily conceived; and a writer in whose works they abound, deserves our gratitude equally with him who should drag us by way of sport through a military hospital, or force us to sit at the dissecting-table of a natural philosopher. To trace the nice boundaries, beyond which terror and sympathy are deserted by the pleasurable emotions,—to reach those limits, yet never pass them,—*hic labor, hoc opus est.* (*Critical Review,* 2d ser., 19 [Feb. 1797], p. 195, Bartolomeo, p. 140)

In the attention shown to the moral expense of emotional transport was underscored the dangerous power of the novel to appear so much like reality as to challenge the priority of the real. Probability named that element of likeness, while also insisting (unlike the claim to historicity) on the crucial fact of difference. The third major tributary to the flood of realism, the explication of aesthetic belief as the willing suspension of disbelief, addressed the affective corollary of probability, that peculiarly doubled state of consciousness which refined and complicated the otherwise monolithic effects of emotional transport. Coleridge's famous formulation of that consciousness as it arises in response to poetry was well preceded by theorizations of it deriving rather from the experience of reading novels. Both Richardson and Fielding self-consciously created for their readers the aesthetic effect of the willing suspension of disbelief—Richardson through the reader-surrogate (for example, Mr B.), Fielding through his omniscient narrator (see McKeon, *Origins,* pp. 361–2, 406–8). But neither theorized this effect as explicitly as did their followers.

One reviewer maintained that "when a person sits down with a novel in his hand, he knows he is going to read a fiction; but if it be well written, he soon forgets that circumstance, under an agreeable imposition; and becomes interested in the narrative, as a history of real events" (*Monthly Review,* 42 [Jan. 1770], p. 70, Bartolomeo, p. 148). Richard Cumberland argued that novelists "are no otherwise *impostors,* than those fair-dealing jugglers are, who candidly warn their spectators beforehand, that their tricks are nothing more than mere slight of hand, the effect of nimble art and practised adroitness, by which they cheat the sight, but aim not to impose upon the understanding; like them, the novelist professes to deal in ingenious deceptions, but deceptions so like truth and nature, that, whilst his performances have all the vivacity of a romance to excite admiration, they have the harmony of a history to engage approbation" (*Henry* [1795], VI, i, Williams, p. 415; contrast Fielding's darker comparison of romance "imposition" to that of a puppet master, in

Jonathan Wild [1743], III, xi, pp. 154–5). Describing the effect of Radcliffe's explained supernatural, a reviewer claimed that "the reader experiences in perfection the strange luxury of artificial terror, without being obliged for a moment to hoodwink his reason, or to yield to the weakness of superstitious credulity" (*Monthly Review,* 2d ser., 15 [Nov. 1794], Williams, p. 393).

The emergence of realism during the latter decades of the eighteenth century (the term itself did not appear until the following century) has a close bearing on a contemporary innovation in the technology of narration that was to have a crucial importance in the history of the novel. Even before Richardson perfected the epistolary mode, it had been prized as a method of achieving, in narrative, the close characterization available in drama through dialogue and monologue (see Day, *Told in Letters,* ch. 7). Richardson seemed to bring all of its potential to fruition. For him epistolary form provided

> the only natural opportunity that could be had, of representing with any grace those lively and delicate impressions which *Things present* are known to make upon the minds of those affected by them. And [the author] apprehends, that, in the study of Human Nature, the knowledge of those apprehensions leads us farther into the recesses of the Human Mind, than the colder and more general reflections suited to a continued and more contracted Narrative.
>
> All the Letters are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects . . . So that they abound not only with critical Situations, but with what may be called *instantaneous* Descriptions and Reflections . . . [This is highly preferable to] "the dry, narrative, unanimated Style of a person relating difficulties and dangers surmounted . . . the relater perfectly at ease; and if himself unmoved by his own Story, not likely greatly to affect the Reader"[4] (Warburton, preface to *Clarissa* [1748], III; Richardson, preface to *Clarissa* [1751]: Williams, pp. 124, 166)

Epistolary form gives immediate access to the deepest emotions of its characters. Its "naturalness" lies not only in the impression it creates of an "instantaneous" "present," but inseparably in the fact that it employs the words, the very consciousness, of those characters: "Slight strokes, and gentle touches, seemingly frivolous and impertinent, have an astonishing effect in strengthening the resemblance of the portraiture . . . [E]very character speaks in his own person, utters his feelings, and delivers his sentiments warm from the heart. It admits of an infinity of natural moral reflections" (*Critical Review,* 11 [Mar. 1761], Williams, p. 234). In accord with the general theory of teaching precept by example, this reviewer affirmed the utility of first-person emotion in stimulating moral instruction. The reward of detached reflection depends upon the prior experience of immediate identification. Epistolary form "keeps the reader in the same suspense, in which the persons themselves are supposed to be." "The illusion is lasting, and complete . . . I interrupt the unhappy Clarissa, in order to mix my tears with hers: I accost her, as if she was present with me. No Author, I believe, ever metamorphosed himself into his characters so perfectly as Richardson" (Beattie, *On Fable and Romance* [1783], *Gentleman's Magazine,* 40 [Oct. 1770]: Williams, pp. 323, 274–5). If, on the other hand, we

begin with the "general reflections" of a "contracted narrative," we are denied the foundation in emotional sympathy on which our moral improvement depends.[5]

However, even Richardson's supporters had to acknowledge the liabilities of epistolary form. It encouraged repetition, prolixity, and the absurdity of universal and incessant letter-writing, even between characters for whom "conversation was within their reach" (Cumberland, *Henry* [1795], III, i, Williams, p. 406). It also promoted the spectacle of vanity. One of Richardson's friends wrote to him that self-praise in characters "should be as much avoided as possible." True, "when the scenes represented are passionate, they must come from the persons concerned, or they lose their spirit." Still, "I am persuaded you can point [out] to us" those virtues that may be abstracted from such scenes of passion (Mrs. Donellan to Richardson [25 Sept. 1750], Williams, p. 148). Fielding was rather more trenchant. Alluding to Richardson's formulation of the pedagogical maxim (story should be considered little more than a vehicle to instruction), he derided the immodest ambition "of reforming a whole people, by making use of a vehicular story, to wheel in among them worse manners than their own" (Preface to *Journal* [1755], p. 30; for Richardson's formulation see Williams, p. 167). The danger of the first person, of unmediated letters—and this is at the parodic heart of *Shamela*—is that they deny the author all third-person opportunity to reflect upon and improve the fully articulated morals of characters who may themselves be vicious.

Although it was practiced by Fielding himself, as well as by a number of novelists of the later eighteenth century (most notably Frances Burney), the narrative technique English-speaking critics have come most commonly to call "free indirect discourse" was not named or fully theorized until the early twentieth century. It may be understood as a method of refining access to character interiority in conjunction with an exteriority free (unlike epistolary form) of the naïve claim to historicity. Recently defined as "the technique for rendering a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration," free indirect discourse combines the virtues of first- and third-person narration by allowing the narrator as it were to enter and speak from within the mind of the character, but also to vacate that internal locale in order to reflect externally upon its contents (Cohn, *Transparent Minds,* p. 100). And yet if the earliest novel theorists never attained this level of definitional precision, the debate concerning the virtues and liabilities of epistolary form came very close—as though to combine the best of both Richardson and Fielding—to evoking the narrative method that was even then being invented. In the present context, free indirect discourse may also be seen as a sophisticated technique, like the method of realism to whose store it contributed, for balancing the claims of example and precept, entertainment and instruction, feeling and reason, first and third person, illusionary artifice and its self-conscious display.

The investment of early realism in achieving this equilibrium between illusion and its display was recognized by the great novel theorists when they affirmed, each in his own way, that the thematization of formal matters on the level of content is central to the novel genre (see Lukács, *Theory,* pp. 60–2, 71–3; Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations,* pp. 143–4; Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination,*

pp. 45–9). By this means, novelistic practice has maintained its characteristic reflexivity, its tendency to reflect "theoretically" upon itself, even in the absence of explicit prefatory commentary. In recharacterizing realism as illusionary artifice alone—as an effort to achieve the transparency effect of immediate representation—poststructuralist theory tells us more about itself than about realism (see Coward and Ellis, *Language and Materialism,* pp. 45–60; Belsey, *Critical Practice,* pp. 47–55, 67–84). For the retrospective simplification of realism only fulfils the paradoxical imperative of the "novel tradition" to conceive each stage of its continuity as though it were wholly innovative upon and discontinuous with what came before.

This having been said, however, we are surely justified in asking how far the doctrine of realism—of transport, probability, and aesthetic belief—preserved the pedagogical end of teaching precept by example that contemporaries associated with the new genre. By eschewing the antithetical improbabilities of both romance and history, realism clearly extends and sophisticates the aim and accomplishment of "naturalness." What is its relationship to "morality"?

On the foregoing evidence, those novelistic categories we now understand as formal and intrinsic—character consistency, unity of design, internal probability—were first elaborated in the express service of an extrinsic moral end to which they now appear irrelevant. The eighteenth-century novel may well be said to "internalize" pedagogy in the way it characteristically conceives the education of the protagonist as a lesson in probabilistic knowledge ideally replicated in the formal experience of the reader (see Patey, *Probability,* chs. 7, 8). But to affirm, more generally, that the teaching of precept in the modern novel has been internalized within the enjoyment of example—so that a pleasurable response is taken to signify the moral worth of the reader—is perhaps only another way of acknowledging the relative unimportance of the moral in the modern evaluation of literature. In the 1790s, probability was characteristically justified not only by its naturalness, but also (therefore) by its capacity for moral instruction. Fifty years later, the pedagogic function of probability is much less likely to be acknowledged by its practitioners.

This is a result of the modern division of knowledge. Modernity is accustomed to see in the eighteenth century an anomalous devotion to moral instruction, to the "didactic." It is important to recognize, however, that this phenomenon represents not so much an increased investment in moral pedagogy as the coalescence of moral pedagogy as one among several categories of knowledge, rather than (as in the customary view) the purpose that superintends them all. The didactic was not simply endorsed at this time; it was constituted as the mode of ostentatiously explicit instruction out of the debris of an older system in which all knowledge had been tacitly and pervasively "didactic." By the same token, contemporary anxiety about the effects of novels on impressionable readers signifies an increase not in the impulse toward social regulation and discursive discipline, but in the apprehension that customary (and highly effective) regulatory discourses were being enervated by social instability.

Most pertinently, the didactic was now separated out over against another

Enlightenment invention, the aesthetic. The model of the novel as example teaching precept would carry little conviction once modernity conceived pleasure and instruction, the "aesthetic" and the "didactic," as essentially incompatible ends. That the novel—the "modern" genre—was none the less first theorized in just these terms suggests its central role in the experimental effort to co-ordinate categories that had been traditionally and tacitly understood as inseparable. And modern novel theory may be said with some plausibility to "internalize" the didactic within the aesthetic insofar as it perpetuates the problem of their emergent opposition in its own more thoroughly formalized terms: character versus plot, description versus narration, showing versus telling, spatial form versus seriality, *jouissance* versus *plaisir,* etc. A comparable effect is achieved when modern novel theory translates the problematic relationship of the aesthetic and the didactic into an extended diachronic series of opposed forms: realism versus the claim to historicity, modernism versus realism, post-modernism versus modernism, etc. (Of course, this argument of period opposition is tacitly undermined by the relativizing continuity of the series itself—that is, by the imperative of an implacably "novel tradition.") Analogously, if (by the logic of gender differentiation) the novel is a "feminized" form, its feminization entails the full internalization of the masculine as a sublimation or refinement of pedagogy, a mitigating "domestication" of a blunt male moralism.

This development may also be adumbrated in the terms of genre history. The traditional prose literary genres—the epic, the romance—had been conceived as narrative fictions that taught a truth higher or deeper than, yet fully compatible with, their fictional form. When empirical and historical truth were accorded their special privilege in the early modern period, fiction was discredited as incompatible with truth. Required to justify itself in turn by its service to morality, by its guise of historicity, by its maintenance of probability, fiction was now explicitly revalued according to criteria that had once been tacitly operative. The novel ceased to be fundamentally opposed to romance once the theory of realism had mastered, in highly sophisticated terms, the basic lesson that fiction might be compatible with truth. This was a lesson romance had always known. And yet the terms in which it could now once again become intelligible were the terms of a complex theory of affective response that had no equivalent for—or appeal to—those who had consumed narrative before the novel's emergence.

Notes

1. Defoe's wrestling may be seen retrospectively as an effort to formulate a theory of realism: see McKeon, *Origins,* pp. 120–2.

2. See John L. Sutton Jr., "The Source of Mrs. Manley's Preface to *Queen Zarah,*" *Modern Philology* 82, 2 (Nov. 1984), 167–72.

3. Compare Charles Brockden Brown's "Advertisement" to *Wieland* (1798), quoted in Perosa, *American Theories,* p. 8.

4. Richardson quotes Belford, vol. 7, letter 22. M. McK.

5. See Godwin's account of his replacement of third- by first-person narration in composing *Caleb Williams* (1794): *Fleetwood* (1805), preface, p. xi.

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28

George Levine

From The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley

Realism is an unfortunate, an ambiguous word, which has been taken up by literary society like a view-halloo.

Thomas Hardy, "The Science of Fiction"

One could wish, to begin with, that the words *realism* and *realist* might never again be used, save in their proper sense by writers on scholastic philosophy.

George Gissing, "The Place of Realism in Fiction"

To take the word *realism* and the idea of representation seriously entails a challenge to the antireferential bias of our criticism and to the method of radical deconstruction that has become a commonplace. It is to challenge the assumptions about the status of literature variously held by Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, and, in the area of Victorian literature, J. Hillis Miller. It is to resist the now well established convention that realism is at best a historically inevitable mistake. I do not attempt anything like a full theoretical confrontation with this way of doing criticism, but choose to avoid extensive speculations on theory in order to keep my eye on the texts whose wonders are the occasion of this study.

Even that choice has important implications for literary theory, and I do not wish to avoid them.[1] They are consonant with the attitude toward realism that I am trying to develop and with the overall argument, theoretically significant, that realism is itself intimately and authoritatively connected to the modernist position. This study, in any case, assumes that criticism has a responsibility both to explication and to history, and this despite powerful epistemological arguments denying the possibility of the referentiality of language, despite semiotic theories that show every sign significant only of other signs within an arbitrary code, despite the indeterminacy of texts. Willy-nilly, criticism addresses itself to something besides itself, even in its most dazzling regressions, and creates communities of meaning (if only to agree on unmeaning). At the risk of ideological and metaphysical complicity with things as they are, criticism must behave at times as though something is really out there

after all. These are not questions of either/or: one is not either for realism or against it, as though this were a football game, or a war. Realism posits "mixed" conditions. So do I.

Ironically, when I began this study it was to call Victorian realism into question, but as I proceeded I found the great Victorian realists to be immensely compatible. Their art and their commitments have driven me to see Victorian realism as an astonishing effort both of moral energy and of art, and one that must not be diminished by the historical distortions of contemporary critical method or by the Whiggish view of history (I used to share), that we know better now. Nevertheless, this study was made possible by the criticism it often attacks in notes, by the contemporary insistence on the sheer textuality of fiction and the consequent impossibility of external reference.

Modernist criticism has been invaluable in bringing to focus the fact, extensively argued by Gerald Graff,[2] that modernism is not so modern as it seems, but is at least two hundred years old. Part of my point throughout this study is that nineteenth-century writers were already self-conscious about the nature of their medium, and that there is a direct historical continuum between the realists who struggled to make narrative meaningful and modern critics who define themselves by virtue of their separation from realism and even from narrativity itself. In the face of arguments that where we have seen unity of vision there is only indeterminacy, where we have found reference there is only self-reference, I argue that the historical situation was too complex for such readings. The Victorians, surely, did write with the awareness of the possibilities of indeterminate meaning and of solipsism, but they wrote *against* the very indeterminacy they tended to reveal. Their narratives do not acquiesce in the conventions of order they inherit but struggle to reconstruct a world out of a world deconstructing, like modernist texts, all around them. With remarkable frequency, they are alert to the arbitrariness of the reconstructed order toward which they point as they imply the inadequacy of traditional texts and, through self-reference and parody, the tenuousness of their own. But they proceed to take the risk of believing in the possibility of fictions that bring us at least a little closer to what is not ourselves and not merely language.

The "realism" with which this study is concerned is not that of the Scholastic philosophers. And it is only minimally that once notorious kind with which late-nineteenth-century writers sought to sweep away the pieties and conventionalities of the mid-Victorians and of their popular imitators. Realism in England belongs, rather, to a much more affable and moderate tradition, focusing not on the dregs of society, not on the degradations and degenerations of humans in bondage to a social and cosmic determinism. It belongs, almost provincially, to a "middling" condition and defines itself against the excesses, both stylistic and narrative, of various kinds of romantic, exotic, or sensational literatures. The programmatic realism of the late century, with its pseudoscientific connections, its "experimental novels," its assumption that the norm of human experience is the extreme, was part of a rebellious movement against the mid-Victorian real and the art that projected it.

The mark of a less insular and more cynical culture was upon this later

realism that Gissing explored, in which George Moore dabbled, and through which the great and not so great French and Russian novelists entered the mainstream of English fiction. But even it can be understood, within the terms I shall be finding for the whole tradition of English realism, as a self-conscious rejection of certain conventions of literary representation and of their implications. Purporting, like all realism, to speak the truth, it in fact invents a truth defined by its almost perfect inversion of mid-Victorian conventions. Thus, where earlier nineteenth-century realists found little incompatibility between "sincere" representation and a conscious attempt to speak helpfully to a sympathetic audience, the later realists insisted, like their more aesthetically inclined contemporaries, on an artistic integrity that alienated them from the traditional novel-reading audience. They imagined that the truth would be offensive to that audience, and found confirmation of their fictions precisely in their offensiveness.

Thus Henry James, in his review of Zola's *Nana,* asks with uncharacteristic Jamesian bitterness, "On what authority does [M. Zola] represent nature to us as a combination of the cesspool and the house of prostitution? On what authority does he represent foulness rather than fairness as the sign that we are to know her by?"[3] And in so speaking, James represents the implicit attitudes, not only of the late-century artists who were fostering a more highly aesthetic literary tradition, but of the earlier realists to whom, however far he developed their art and perhaps transcended it, he owed his primary allegiance. For in their inversion of the very tradition that James was trying to outgrow by a renewed partly Flaubertian preoccupation with the nature of his medium, the later realists rejected not only the predominantly middle class perception of reality that informed the moderate landscapes of the Victorian novel, but also the apparently rarefied and genteel emphasis on form and pattern, as opposed to the hard, cold "truth," in the aesthetic tradition to which, we might say, James, and Pater, and Wilde, and the later George Moore in their various ways belonged.

But the later realism, as an alternative to the earlier and apparently conventionalized realism, had few serious exponents in England, where there are no Maupassants or Zolas or Goncourts. Gissing, Hardy, James, Conrad, Moore himself—they all rejected the "experimental novel": and, despite their great differences, they wrote recognizably within the English tradition and sought to reconcile form and art with an appeal both to truth and to their audiences. Nevertheless, the emergence of late-century realism marks an important stage in the breakdown of the realism with which I am primarily concerned; and that stage further complicates the word *realism,* making it an even more dangerously multivalent one.

It is, nevertheless, an inescapable word, and in what follows I risk the dangers because with all the divergent possibilities of meaning, the word, in its literary application, carries a consistent thrust through all its inconsistent history. Whatever else it means, it always implies an attempt to use language to get beyond language, to discover some nonverbal truth out there. The history of English realism obviously depended in large measure on changing notions of what *is* "out there," of how best to "represent" it, and of whether, after

all, representation is possible or the "out there" knowable. The history was further complicated by the artist's sense of responsibility to the audience, by conventions of propriety, and by the nature of earlier literary imaginations of the "real." Moreover, there is the problem that "realistic" did not become a label for novels until rather late, so that while Ian Watt can talk about the "rise of realism" in the eighteenth century, the word in ordinary usage is associated not so much with Jane Austen's kind of novel as with Arnold Bennett's or Gissing's, and even more, of course, with Zola's. Nevertheless, I assume a continuity from Defoe through to the nineteenth century, and I begin this study with Jane Austen.

Nineteenth-century realism was an international phenomenon, with its deepest roots in the transformations of culture and literature that we call by the name "Romantic." Realism presumes that the "ordinary" (another difficult but persistent word) has a value hitherto ascribed almost exclusively to the experience of the select few. What was generically low and comic became, as Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* has definitively shown, mixed and serious. Realism tended to explode the distinctions between high and low in art, although the traces of a comic and "low mimetic" tradition remain visible even now. In England, realism developed its own conventions as it recoiled from earlier "misrepresentations," so that there are easily recognizable similarities among fictions that are ostensibly shaped primarily by their commitment to plausibility and truthfulness rather than to generic conventions.

My concern here is primarily with the development and disruption and transformation of these similarities as they hardened into conventions that were recognized *as* conventions. That they did so harden is manifest, for example, in Gissing's casual dismissal of them in the midst of an attack on the later realism. Realism, Gissing says, "merely contrasts with the habit of mind which assumes that a novel is written 'to please people,' that disagreeable facts must always be kept out of sight, that human nature must be systematically flattered, that the book must have a 'plot,' that the story should end on a cheerful note, and all the rest of it."[4] That "habit of mind," ironically, was what had become of Victorian realism, so that the "realism" Gissing evokes against it is apparently an altogether different thing. Actually however, this later realism is, in effect, using the earlier ideal of realism, the attempt to represent life sincerely, to dismiss its own hardened conventions.

The sticky self-contradictions latent in this relatively simple use of the word will get even stickier. The great novelists of the nineteenth century were never so naive about narrative conventions or the problems of representation as later realists or modern critics have suggested. If we now can detect the conventionality of their admirable struggles to get at truth without imprisoning it in conventions, we can also see that the attempt allies them with the very writers and critics who defined themselves by rejecting them. The later realism is only one evidence of the self-contradictory nature of realism itself.

My concern, then, is not with a definition of "realism," but with a study of its elusiveness. As an idea realism is one thing (or many things); as a literary practice, it is quite another (or others). I want to focus on the practice. In this case at least, our current emphasis on theory as opposed to practice, and the

theoretical arguments against exegesis, are a danger to theory itself. No theory of the novel can stand that is not based firmly in a detailed consideration of what novelists actually did. A theory of realism, for instance, which fails to take into account the way particular novels radically change, in style and "content," the conventions of the past and present that realism is frequently said to affirm, can be no theory at all. The theory of this study is, thus, embedded in and inseparable from the exegeses of texts.

Writers and critics return to "realism," from generation to generation, because each culture's perception of reality changes and because literature requires ever new means to intimate the reality. As we may by now be tired of hearing, language, in representing reality, most forcefully demonstrates reality's absence. At best, language creates the illusion of reality so that our current definitions of realism swerve from implying the possibility of direct representation to focus on the difference between the medium and the reality whose absence it registers. Language, finally, can "represent" only other language. Thus a convenient and slippery definition provided by David Lodge comes close to accommodating both our common sense notion that realism tries to represent reality and our sophisticated awareness that it cannot. Realism, he says, is "the representation of experience in a manner which approximates closely to description of similar experience in non-literary texts of the same culture."[5] The philosophical holes in this are large, but no definition of realism can be quite satisfactory. And insofar as this one attempts to get at the connection between nonfictional and fictional experience, it does good service.

But my focus will be on the struggle inherent in any "realist" effort—the struggle to avoid the inevitable conventionality of language in pursuit of the unattainable unmediated reality. Realism, as a literary method, can in these terms be defined as a self-conscious effort, usually in the name of some moral enterprise of truth and extending the limits of human sympathy, to make literature appear to be describing directly not some other language but reality itself (whatever that may be taken to be); in this effort, the writer must self-contradictorily dismiss previous conventions of representation while, in effect, establishing new ones. No major Victorian novelists were deluded into believing that they were in fact offering an unmediated reality; but all of them struggled to make contact with the world out there, and, even with their knowledge of their own subjectivity, to break from the threatening limits of solipsism, of convention, and of language. Some aspects of their continuing struggle make the subject of this book.

Abstractly, their struggles follow the large-scale fate of the word *realism* itself. For realism begins, in Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophers, as the reification of the ideal, belief in the prior reality of universals and in the merely contingent reality of things. The idea exists outside the thinker and before the thing. Yet, by a well-known historical quirk, realism slides over to mean its opposite. The elements are the same: ideas and things. But now things are independent of consciousness, ideas empirically contingent upon things. In commonsense language, this way of imagining the world makes realism a grumpy suspicion of ideas, a hard-nosed facing of the facts and of the power of the external world over dream, desire, idea. Ironically, however, this realism

edges back in modern thought and literature toward its beginnings, or toward its own entire elimination. For in the new relationship between idea and thing, they become incommensurate, as in nineteenth-century fiction. Neither can be contingent on the other. The idea is reified again, but phenomenally, as an idea, not as a prior reality or a means to reality. By virtue, then, of the very "realistic" discourse that marks the connection between idea and thing, we are, in the modernist predicament, cut off from things. The idea becomes the clearest indication of the thing's absence. Language, as mediator, can be about only itself, for each predicate modifies not the thing, but another predicate, obeys the rules not of the idea but of its own ordering principles. What language attempts to possess by describing eludes, like Keats's fair maiden of the urn, our longing embrace.[6]

But I do not want to dwell on the abstraction. Although my focus must be on realism as a convention, it is a mode that depends heavily on our commonsense expectation that there are direct connections between word and thing. And hence, of all literary movements, realism is most threatened by the contemporary severing of text from referent. Realism, after all, was initiated out of and against the severance. The coincidence of realism and parody[7] is a well-established idea to which I shall be returning frequently, but that coincidence should remind us of the centrality to realism of a self-conscious rejection of literature. Like Don Quixote's friends, realism seems intent on burning libraries, recognizing the madness of taking what is only a text as though it had the authority of reality. Yet, like the Don's friends, realism never quite burns all the books: it claims for itself a special authority. Part of realism's complex fate has to do with the continuing struggle of its practitioners to avoid the implications of their own textuality, that they are merely part of the Don's library, deserving of burning. Much of the power of nineteenth-century realist fiction derives from the integrity of its pursuit of possibilities that would paradoxically deprive it of its authority and sever it from its responsibility to reality and audience. With the high Victorian ideal of Truth or Sincerity, novelists exposed the artificiality of their own conventions, tested the limits of their own exclusions, and as best they could kept their eyes on their objects.

It is no accident, therefore, that conventionally we speak of "romance" as the most obvious alternative to realism. As we shall see with Austen and Thackeray, much nineteenth-century realism defined itself against romance because that form implied wish fulfillment rather than reality. And the romance/realism dichotomy, classically stated by Richard Chase, variously imagined by writers from Clara Reeve and Walter Scott to Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry James to Northrop Frye and Leslie Fiedler, does require attention. But "romance" has become almost as confused a term as "realism." At present, the conventional dichotomy may help to suggest an alternative to the way I am imagining the problem of realism. What I shall be calling "contradictions" in the realist's program may be seen as more absolute differences in genre.[8] Edward Eigner's recent study, for example, valuably extends this way of arguing. He distinguishes the predominantly mimetic writers from what he calls the "metaphysical novelists," who describe not so much the "effect of experience on individuals," as "the nature of experience itself."[9]

The value of such a generic distinction is evident in the details of Eigner's excellent study, but its elaboration also runs counter to the very mixed condition of Victorian thought. Victorian nonfiction is rich with instances of arguments, firmly based in the mimetic ideal, that make no distinction between what we might call scientific description and metaphysical speculation. One of the primary efforts of Victorian thought was to reconcile empirical science with metaphysical truth.[10] We find such effort, although unsystematic, in most of Ruskin's work, as it is already implicit in Carlyle's. Moreover the great Victorian system maker, Herbert Spencer, the creator of "The Unknowable," claimed to be creating his system inductively. One of the most interesting and touching fragments of such an effort can be found in G. H. Lewes's five-volume *Problems of Life and Mind,* the last two volumes of which were published posthumously by George Eliot, and about which I shall have much to say later.

As we look over the criticism that attached to realism from the start, we find recurring objections to what Hardy was later to attack as mere "copyism."[11] The antimimetic tradition most forcefully espoused by Bulwer never completely lost out, and in fact occupied an important position in the dominant realistic tradition. Although, retrospectively, we can find little important Victorian fiction validly subject to the complaint of copying, the possibility worried many writers. Reviewers in the *Quarterly,* early in the century, were lamenting the failure of novelists working the new field of the "domestic" to throw over their narratives "the colours of poetry."[12] Ironically, late-century writers were finding Victorian realism too ideal, insufficiently real or faithful in its copying. The opposite of realism, Lewes had said around mid-century, was not idealism but "Falsism."

Lewes's defense of realism implies, nevertheless, a cultural consensus that realism tended to be *un*-poetic and *un*-ideal. But the very lateness with which the word appeared on the literary scene, and the difficulty it had surviving serious criticism[13] from novelists themselves, suggest that in England at least the convention was a symptom not of a realistic school, but of a tendency among very different writers. The ease with which realism was reconciled with other objectives—the ideal, the beautiful—further implies not a single genre but a variety of ways of organizing some special historical perspectives. The isolation of a genre to be called the realistic novel entails a circular inductive method: the abstraction from novels we already presume to be realistic of the qualities that make them so. I prefer to keep the focus on the qualities nineteenth-century writers shared, without worrying about generic labels. In a chapter on Thackeray, I shall discuss many of the qualities in detail.

Whatever qualities are abstracted to produce a definition of genre that would include, say, both James's *The Ambassadors* and Thackeray's *Vanity Fair,* formal differences would subvert the definition. The continuing literary problem that plagued realism from the start was the incompatibility of tight form with plausibility. "The realistic writer soon finds," says Northrop Frye, "that the requirements of literary form and plausible content always fight against each other."[14] James's disapproval of much Victorian fiction is partly a disapproval of the expansiveness of form required to produce a cumulatively effective plausibility.

Whatever its difficulties and contradictions, however, realism was a historical impulse that manifested itself as a literary method and imposed itself on almost every form of prose narrative. It was a method consonant with empirical science in that it was exploratory rather than definitive. The method of realism, George Lukács has argued, is a method of discovery, not of representation of preestablished realities.[15] The quest could lead in the direction of the "metaphysical novelists," but normally only through the exploration of the here and now; and although realism may make the particular typical, it resists using allegorical forms and prefers what we might call a Wordsworthian method of finding in the individual a common human appeal. The truth realism sought was replacing the transcendent reality that had dominated knowledge until the Renaissance,[16] but that truth could lead out from the particular once more to an alternative transcendence—as, say, in the Feuerbachian ideal of George Eliot. In withdrawing a metaphysical sanction from reality, George Eliot immediately replaced it with a "humanist" sanction by seeing the forms of human experience in a Wordsworthian light, as manifestations of a large, morally sanctified community. The secular truth might lead as well to a negative transcendence, as in the structure of Hardy's fiction. There, the Providential patterns are exactly reversed to give to the defeated protagonist an almost transcendent dignity. The variety of possibilities reflects the way the realistic impulse is most precisely located in the historical context of a secularizing movement directed against the falsehoods of earlier imaginations of reality. Because it was an impulse particularly vulnerable to social, scientific, and epistemological transformation, its actual embodiments were polymorphous.

If it were possible to locate a single consistent characteristic of realism among its various rejections of traditional forms and ideals, it would be that antiliterary thrust I have already noted; and this thrust is also—inevitably—antigeneric in expression. The quest for unmediated experience becomes central to the dramatic tensions of most realistic fiction, even where the rhetorical strategy is to establish several layers of mediation—as in *Wuthering Heights,* which is generically a romance, or in *The Newcomes,* with Pendennis narrating a quintessentially realistic fiction. The fate of realism and its complicated relation to all those literary forms in which it confusedly manifests itself are intimately involved with the writer's and the culture's capacity to believe in the accessibility of experience beyond words.

If we agree to take realism in this way, as a historical phenomenon, we can discuss it with some precision, locate those qualities that mark it as anticonventional, and keep it unstably in process. For the label, "realism," sticks. In disentangling the threads that weave the label, I want to insist on three major points. First, realism *was* always in process as long as it was important to nineteenth-century fiction; second, there was no such thing as naive realism—simple faith in the correspondence between word and thing—among serious Victorian novelists; and third and not quite contradictorily, Victorian realists, recognizing the difference between truth and the appearance of truth, did try to embrace the reality that stretched beyond the reach of language. Their eyes and hearts were on Keats's fair maiden.

Despite its appearance of solidity, realism implies a fundamental uneasi-

ness about self, society, and art. It becomes a dominant way of seeing at the time J. Hillis Miller describes as marking "the splitting apart of [the communion] of verbal symbols with the reality they named."[17] While "Nature" had become for Carlyle a "grand unnameable Fact,"[18] poets and novelists were engaged in naming it. But the activity was self-conscious, and truth telling was raised to the level of doctrine. Such intensity of commitment to speaking the truth suggests difficulties where before none had been perceived. The mystery lay not beyond phenomena, but in them. Description, as Lukács argues, begins at the point where things are felt to be alienated from human activity. Realists take upon themselves a special role as mediator, and assume self-consciously a moral burden that takes a special form: their responsibility is to a reality that increasingly seems "unnameable," as Carlyle implies mockingly in the pseudo-science that opens *Sartor Resartus;* but it is also to an audience that requires to be weaned or freed from the misnaming literatures past and current. The quest for the world beyond words is deeply moral, suggesting the need to reorganize experience and reinvest it with value for a new audience reading from a new base of economic power.

The general disrepute into which novel writing had fallen by the beginning of the nineteenth century, although it does not imply disbelief in the power of language to engage reality, does express moral and intellectual outrage at the dominance of literature that trivialized human experience. We see this outrage in Carlyle's puritanical distrust of fiction as a form of lying (picked up and turned upside down by Oscar Wilde in "The Decay of Lying"); in Macaulay's affectionate unease with the appeal of fiction to what is childish in us; in Thackeray's extensive ironies or Austen's amused defense. In the vigor of the dismissal of earlier literature, particularly of the popular novels by women at the end of the eighteenth century, of gothic, sentimental, and silver-fork novels, is an implicit consensus that literature had to be relocated. Although the novel remained an amusement, it often attempted to become (sometimes willy-nilly became) an instrument of knowledge as well.

The relocation entailed a shift of focus from the large to the small, from the general to the particular, and a diminishment of dramatic extremes, as from tragedy to pathos. It is a commonplace to say that realism does not stay at that reduced scale, but the criterion of plausibility requires at least that the beginnings be here, where the characteristic mid-century novel struggles to remain. The shift and the transience of the shift are captured as early as *Sketches by Boz,* where Dickens can be seen learning his craft by learning how to give to the particular and ordinary the resonances traditionally to be found in the universals of an earlier philosophy and literature.

In the first sketch, as published in book form, Dickens's opening words might be taken as a metaphor, or a thesis sentence, for realism's effort to make the ordinary significant: "How much is conveyed in those two short words—'The Parish!' And with how many tales of distress and misery, of broken fortune and ruined hopes, too often of unrelieved wretchedness and successful knavery are they associated!"[19] Already, Dickensian melodrama is present, the impatience with limits; yet the means of transcending limits is "the parish," not a religious organization but a commonplace secular society—Austen's

kind of geography. Crude as Dickens's method may be, the means of transcending limits is the exploration of the known as though it were unknown. Dickens will not merely copy the parish, he will see it with a freshness and clarity that will at once make it recognizable to the new popular audience who might take it seriously as a subject, and transform it. The particular, under the pressure of intense and original seeing, gives back the intensities normally associated with larger scale, traditional forms. That such a passage as this sounds now like a cliché and belongs to the "Our Town" convention implies much about the fate of mid-century realism. In any case, by looking intensely at doorknobs, and walls, and old clothes, and cabmen, Dickens uses his *Sketches* to bring together the particular and the conventional, the ordinary and the extreme, making experience amusing, as George Eliot would say of art, by enlarging our sympathies and our knowledge.

Dickens, certainly, was less easy with the limits of realism than most of his contemporaries, but he shares here its mimetic and exploratory tendencies. And his example suggests, perhaps more than the examples of, say, Thackeray, Trollope, and George Eliot, that it is perverse to apply to realism a critical method that assumes the separation of language from its object and the irresistibly conventional nature of literary forms. In his essay on the *Sketches,* J. Hillis Miller attempts precisely to apply such a method: "Any literary text is both self-referential and extra-referential, or rather it is open to being not seen as the former and mistakenly taken as the latter. All language is figurative, displaced. All language is beside itself."[20] Yet surely the figurativeness of the *Sketches* appears to be asking to be taken as "extra-referential." Surely, too, to treat as conventions of literature such references as that to "broken fortunes and ruined homes" does violence, if not to the experience of reading, then to the historical force of the language. Laurence Lerner speaks directly to this difficulty:

> To treat romance, fable, or comedy in terms of a set of literary conventions, devices for noticing some things and not others, is to say nothing unacceptable to the practitioners of these modes; but to treat realism in this way is to knock the bottom out of its programme . . . To treat realism as merely another set of conventions is to display such a lack of sympathy with its aims as to be virtually incapacitated from appreciating its products.[21]

Such sanely antitheoretical arguments belong in the tradition of realism they defend. Lerner, moreover, understands many of the difficulties of his position. Nevertheless, although Miller carries the argument beyond its historically justifiable place, and Lerner has a firm historical sense of the realist's position, no historical perspective that ignores the problems posed by modern epistemology and criticism can entirely sustain itself. E. H. Gombrich's classic discussion of this kind of problem demonstrates that in spite of a deep commitment to the external real, the artist must use conventions for the representation of reality from which nobody working the medium can too widely depart,[22] and that representations of reality normally change through more or less subtle variations on other representations in the medium—like Constable's on Cozens's clouds, like Austen's on the gothic novel. All perception is mediated

by the culture into which one is born so that the Heaven that "lies about us in our infancy . . . fade[s] into the light of common day." "There is no reality," says Roland Barthes, "not already classified by man."[23] And while every beginning, like Dickens's own, is a discontinuity, discontinuity produces, as Edward Saïd argues, a "difference which is the result of combining the already-familiar with the fertile novelty of human work in language."[24] Beginnings and discontinuities can be understood only by way of relationship. And the beginning, for writers in the tradition with which I am concerned, implies differences within a range so recognizably shared that they seem, in their very unconventionality, conventional. While Victorian realists strained to be extrareferential, and must be read as though they were, the nature of their "references" or "representations" is comprehensible only if we also see its conventionality.

We get close to the texture of realism, however, if we recognize that narratives touched by the realistic impulse try to resist or circumvent the formal conventions of narrative. The primary conventions of realism are its deflation of ambition and passion, its antiheroism, its tendency to see all people and things within large containing social organizations and, hence, its apparently digressive preoccupation with surfaces, things, particularities, social manners.[25] Committed to treat "things as they are and not as the story teller would like them to be for his convenience"[26] realists assume the possibility of making the distinction and thus save meaning at the sacrifice of pleasure. Realism further complicates itself because in requiring a continuing alertness to the secret lust of the spirit to impose itself on the world—if not as hero, then as martyr—and in resisting the romance forms that embody those lusts, it is always on the verge of another realism: the recognition that the reality it most adequately represents is a subtly disguised version of its own desires.

There is, then, a continuing tradition of self-consciousness in realistic fiction, a tradition formally initiated in *Don Quixote.* The self-consciousness marks realism's awareness both of other literature and of the strategies necessary to circumvent it, and—at last—its awareness of its own unreality. The complex fate of realism as it unfolds through the century is latent in that self-consciousness. Ironically, the self-consciousness itself becomes a convention, and we can detect it in realism's most overt anti-literary manifestos. A look at a few of these provides a useful starting point.

> If, among those who may be tempted to peruse my history, there should be any mere novel-readers, let me advise them to throw the book aside at the commencement of this chapter, for I have no more wonderful incidents to relate, no more charges at the muse, no more sudden turns of fortune. I am now become a plodding man of business. (Maria Edgeworth, "Ennui, or Memoirs of the Earl of Glenthorne" [1804])

> I do not invite my fair readers, whose sex and impatience gives them the greatest right to complain of these circumstances, into a flying chariot drawn by hippogriffs, or moved by enchantment. Mine is an humble English post-chaise, drawn upon four wheels, and keeping his Majesty's highway. Such as dislike the vehicle may leave it at the next halt, and wait for the conveyance of Prince Hussein's tapestry. (Scott, *Waverley* [1814])

> All which details, I have no doubt, JONES, who reads this book at his Club, will pronounce to be excessively foolish, trivial, twaddling, and ultra-sentimental. Yes; I can see Jones at this minute (rather flushed with his joint of mutton and half-pint of wine), taking out his pencil and scoring under the words "foolish, twaddling," etc., and adding to them his own remark of "*quite true.*" Well, he is a lofty man of genius, and admires the great and heroic in life and novels; and so had better take warning and go elsewhere. (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* [1847])

> If you think from this prelude that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations: reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool, and solid lies before you; something as unromantic as Monday morning, when all who work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto. It is not positively affirmed that you shall not have a taste of the exciting, perhaps towards the middle and close of the meal, but it is resolved that the first dish set upon the table shall be one that a Catholic—ay, even an Anglo-Catholic—might eat on Good Friday in Passion Week; it shall be cold lentils and vinegar without oil; it shall be unleavened bread with bitter herbs and no roast lamb. (Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* [1849])

> The Rev. Amos Barton, whose sad fortunes I have undertaken to relate, was, you perceive, in no respect an ideal or exceptional character, and perhaps I am doing a bold thing to bespeak your sympathy on behalf of a man who was so very far from remarkable,—a man whose virtues were not heroic, and who had no undetected crime within his breast; who had not the slightest mystery hanging about him, but was palpably and unmistakably commonplace; who was not even in love, but had that complaint favourably many years ago. "An utterly uninteresting character!" I think I hear a lady reader exclaim—Mrs. Farthingale, for example, who prefers the ideal in fiction, to whom tragedy means ermine tippets, adultery, and murder; and comedy, the adventures of some personage who is quite a "character." . . .
>
> Depend upon it, you would gain unspeakably if you would learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out through dull, grey eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones. (George Eliot, "The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," *Scenes of Clerical Life* [1857])

The family resemblances are remarkable, and these quotations are unquestionably characteristic of a tone and attitude that dominated in English fiction for the first fifty or sixty years of the nineteenth century. They are kin, for example, to the parodic opening of *Northanger Abbey,* in which Catherine Morland is defined by virtue of her qualities inappropriate to heroines; to Dickens's explanation of the naturalness of melodrama in *Oliver Twist* (ch. 17); to the mock-heroic language of some passages in *Barchester Towers,* and to Trollope's explanation there of why he abjures surprises in fiction, and has difficulties with happy endings; to the strategy of Mrs. Gaskell in *Mary Barton* of at-

tempting to force upon the reader a recognition of the "hidden romances" in "the lot of those who daily pass you by in the street."[27]

Although such passages had become commonplace by the time of George Eliot, each writer, however sophisticated, writes as though the enterprise of the ordinary in fiction were new and difficult, and that in 1860 as well as 1804, the audience had to be warned and cajoled about it. Yet there are differences in the rhetorical strategies, suggesting that the stakes were getting higher. What light satire remains in the passage by George Eliot (compare Mrs. Farthingale with Thackeray's Mr. Jones) moves into a rhetoric of almost romantic intensity, so that the style insists on the seriousness which, in Austen, Scott, even Thackeray, is one of the immediate objects of derision. Even the awkward satirical thrust of the passage from *Shirley* is intense enough to belie the Thackerayan gestures in the metaphors of food. Thematically, that is to say, these passages all conventionally assert that fiction should shift its focus from the extreme to the ordinary, and that to do so is morally instructive; rhetorically, they imply that to do so is also to violate the dominant conventions of fiction (implicitly absurd, immoral, or both), but in fact to make fiction more, not less, intense, and to give back with greater authenticity by Wordsworthian strategies the very romantic powers taken away in the rejection of conventions.

The refusal of major realists to acknowledge the conventionality of these strategies has partly to do with the nature of much popular fiction of the time, but more important, the refusal was essential to the convention itself. It supported the special authenticity the realist novel claimed by emphasizing its primary allegiance to experience over art. But there is no need to think the emphasis disingenuous. In adopting the technique of the direct address to the audience in order to justify the treatment of ordinary experience, all these writers participate in a cultural project—moral, empirical, and self-conscious—that appears conventional only in retrospect.

The epistemology that lay behind realism was empiricist, with its tendency to value immediate experience over continuities or systems of order, and it was obviously related to the developments in empirical science as they ran through the century. These developments did not, of course, validate either the discontinuities empiricism would seem to imply, or the minimizing of imagination and intuition. Yet in requiring the validation of imagination in the visible world, recognizable to the audience that figures so prominently in these passages, realism posits a tension between imagination (with the faculty of reason, as well) and reality. Values are reversed in that the realistic method proceeds to what is not visible—the principles of order and meaning—through the visible; the a priori now requires validation.

But the process does not imply a mere literalism of reportage, or "copyism." The implication of each of these passages, most powerfully developed by George Eliot, is that the aim of the apparently dull record of the humdrum is to discover "the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy." The writers all share a faith that the realist's exploration will reveal a comprehensible world. George Eliot requires that her narrative, attaining to tragedy, convey the impression of an empirically shareable experience. Its relation to reality may be mediated by consciousness, but it is authenticated by the appeal of

consciousness to the shared consciousness of the community of readers. For the realistic method, it is a matter of balance.[28]

One of the dominant theories about nineteenth-century English realism has pointed misleadingly to a reconciliation of these difficulties. If the reality observed is coherent and meaningful, so the theory runs, so too will be its represented form. Thus, the important distinction between realism of correspondence and realism of coherence, invented (used even by the Victorians) to cope with the difference between the text and its subject, between reality and art's appearance of reality, is lost. Ioan Williams, arguing the standard case, for example, says that "there is no doubt that the mid-Victorian novel rested on a massive confidence as to what the nature of Reality actually was," and that "the most fundamental common element in the work of the mid-Victorian novelist is probably the idea that human life, whatever the particular conditions, may ultimately be seen as unified and coherent."[29] Generally, the quotations confirm this view: they do, after all, conclude with "tragedy and comedy," and the apparent confidence with which they imply the value of the trivial suggests an underlying organicism, characteristic of Victorian thought.

But reflection suggests that what is most striking in these passages is not their unquestioning confidence, but their self-consciousness about the difficulties of the arguments in favor of common sense. They are engaged in a battle parallel to that familiar one, most allegorically handled in *Hard Times,* between life, with all its emotion and vitality, and utilitarianism, with all its analytic calculation. The organic and the mechanical are opposed forces in Victorian fiction, and the deadliness of the struggle is most apparent in post-Darwinian thought: the faith was that science would reveal the organic, the secularist's last hope for meaning and the validation of morality; the fear was that it would yield only the mechanical. The distinction made by G. H. Lewes can make clear how important the struggle was if realism was to retain any contact with the values from which it had cut itself off:

> Theoretically taking the Organism to pieces to understand its separate parts, we fall into the error of supposing that Organism is a mere assemblage of organs, like a machine which is put together by juxtaposition of different parts. But this is radically to misunderstand its essential nature and the universal solidarity of its parts. The Organism is not made, not put together, but *evolved;* its parts are not juxtaposed, but differentiated, its organs are groups of minor organisms, all sharing in a common life.[30]

The mechanical reading of the organs is an implicit threat through much of nineteenth-century fiction. Metaphorically, it is foreshadowed by Victor Frankenstein's creation of his monster, and the terrible threat of the nonrational violence built into that machine lurks behind the human ideals that give meaning to the lives of fiction's protagonists, as Pip's ambitions are the reverse image of murderous, Orlick-like desires. For Lewes, the emphasis on organism is part of an argument that leads to metaphysics through science, necessary because common perception and common sense fail to yield the truth visible under the microscope.

None of the novelists uses a microscope, of course, although George Eliot is driven to the analogy herself; but the passages I have quoted all suggest an uneasiness about what unaided vision can yield. The self-consciousness manifests itself in the self-denigrating language with which they refer to the reality they are to describe: the production of "a plodding man of business," "trivial, twaddling, and ultra-sentimental," like "cold lentils and vinegar," or "an utterly uninteresting character."

We need to shift the balance in our appraisal of realism. It was not a solidly self-satisfied vision based in a misguided objectivity and faith in representation, but a highly self-conscious attempt to explore or create a new reality. Its massive self-confidence implied a radical doubt, its strategies of truth telling, a profound self-consciousness. In a culture whose experience included the Romantic poets and the philosophical radicals; Carlyle and Newman attempting to define their faiths; Charles Lyell telling it that the world reveals "no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end"; the Higher Criticism of the Bible from Germany; Hume, Kant, Goethe, Comte, and Spencer, with their varying systems or antisystems; non-Euclidean geometry and a new anthropology made possible by a morally dubious imperialism; John Stuart Mill urging liberty and women's equality; Darwin, Huxley, and the agnostics; Tennyson struggling to reimagine faith; Browning, Arnold, Swinburne, Pater—in such a culture it is more than a little difficult to imagine a serious literary mode based on a "massive confidence as to what the nature of Reality actually was." In *Dombey and Son* the railroad produces an "earthquake" and opens up new realities to the insular Dombey (but more important, to his insular audience). In *The French Revolution* Carlyle describes a world in constant process, always burning, and warns of the possible consummation for English society. And Mrs. Gaskell—in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*—maneuvers carefully against what she feared correctly to be a growing breach between the classes.

The confident moralism of which the great Victorian writers are frequently accused turns out almost invariably to be an attempt to rediscover moral order after their primary energies have been devoted to disrupting conventions of moral judgment. The tradition reflected in the passages I have quoted belongs with Wordsworth's attempt to "choose incidents and situations from common life, and . . . to throw over them a certain coloring of the imagination," and with Carlyle's attempt to persuade us to see every drawing room as the crossroads of the infinite. Nineteenth-century realism, far from apologizing for what is, deliberately subverts judgments based on dogma, convention, or limited perception and imagination. Mr. Podsnap is the enemy not only of Dickens, but of all the Victorian novelists. For Stephen Blackpool and Mr. Tulliver it's a "puzzle" or a "muddle." What seems clear becomes cloudy as we see more and from different perspectives. Even as they articulate the social codes, these novels complicate them, engaging our sympathy with lost women, tyrannical husbands, murderers, revolutionaries, moral weaklings, rebellious girls, spendthrifts, and dilettantes. When George Eliot dismisses the "men of maxims," she only articulates what is implicit in the realistic impulse, and when by shifting perspectives she reimagines the nature and worth of her

characters, she only acts out formally what Thackeray constantly talked about and what she had already discovered in Scott's novels, as they treated sympathetically both sides of every historical conflict.

The disruptions of moral judgment, of aesthetic patterning, of common sense perceptions have a serious import that we can too easily solemnize. After all, despite the disappearance of God, the potential disappearance of meaning, the mysteries and disruptions, the primary form in which most nineteenth-century English realism manifests itself is comedy. Even these highly moral passages, urging upon us what seems an ascetic renunciation of the glamorous, are partly comic performances. They seem to take pleasure in the details they invoke from outside the patterning conventions of romance. And the great realistic fictions are exuberant with details, even when they are melancholy thematically. The alienation implied by description is partially compensated for by the sheer pleasure of being able to *see,* as though for the first time, the clutter of furniture, the cut of clothing, the mutton chop and the mug of hot rum, the flushed cheeks of Mr. Jones, and the dull grey eyes of Amos Barton. This very vitality of detail is part of the realist's gestures at life, for they will not succumb to the conventions of patterning. James Kincaid finds in Trollope, for example, "a sense that genuine life is to be found only outside all pattern."[31] It is just possible that—as I shall argue in my discussion of Thackeray—the realist's self-conscious rejection of form represents a viable alternative to the Jamesian self-conscious restriction and purification of form. There is a violence implied in the conventions of narrative that wrests resolution from the muddle of experience. If nineteenth-century realism normally succumbs to these wishful thrusts, it also typically indulges in the satisfaction of anticlimactic wisdom, pretending that life extends beyond its pages, that life is only partially reflected in the novel's multitudinous disregard. There is a pleasure in knowing life, and a pleasure in the power to seduce an audience into believing it has seen life too.

As we explore even the most conservative of the classic novels of the nineteenth century, we find continuing experiments with forms, styles, modes of valuing. Those experiments are not aberrations from some realistic norm, but intrinsic to its nature. Resisting forms, it explores reality to find them; denying excess, it deserts the commonplace self-consciously asserted as its subject. Positing the reality of an external world, it self-consciously examines its own fictionality. Even as we watch the apparently confident assimilation of reality to comic patterns, we find fissures, and merely "literary" conventions required to imply the reality of those patterns. The realistic novel persistently drives itself to question not only the nature of artificially imposed social relations, but the nature of nature, and the nature of the novel.

Realism exists as a process,[32] responsive to the changing nature of reality as the culture understood it, and evoking with each question another question to be questioned, each threatening to destroy that quest beyond words, against literature, that is its most distinguishing mark. What consistency there may be in the fate of realism is no greater than that we can find among the implications of these passages: preoccupation with the nature of their own materials; willingness to violate narrative conventions to call attention to themselves;

implicit comparison between the falsities and pleasures of literature and the truths and rigors of life; concern with audience and the moral consequences of the activities of reading and writing; the moral urgency of seeing with disenchanted clarity and valuing the ordinary as the touchstone of human experience. The impelling energy in the quest for the world beyond words is that the world be there, and that it be meaningful and good; the persistent fear is that it is merely monstrous and mechanical, beyond the control of human meaning. Realism risks that reality and its powers of disruption. And while it represses the dreams and desires of the self with the cumulative, formless energies of the ordinary, it seeks also the self's release—sometimes in the very formlessness of the ordinary, sometimes in the increasingly complicated elaborations of the conventions and forms of the novel (which need, as Frank Kermode has noted, to become more difficult and less fairy-talish in order to be convincingly satisfying).[33] In the integrity of its explorations, realism increasingly imagined the limits of its power to reinform, the monstrous possibility of the unnameable, the likelihood that the monstrous lurked in its very desire to see and to make the world good.

In the chapters that follow I shall be elaborating, with reference to many important texts of the century, the ideas about realism I have been suggesting here. The variousness of the manifestations of realism make anything short of a detailed study of all the novels a distortion, yet I think certain patterns are discernible. And although it would be artificial to propose a single coherent history in which the contradictions implicit in realism work themselves out and eventually destroy it, I do believe that a roughly chronological pattern can be offered plausibly. I have tried, in any case, to honor the integrity of these rich and complex texts, and while distrusting realism, to find my theory—like a good realist, I suppose—in the details of the art it purports to account for.

Notes

1. See, e.g., Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London, 1976) and Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton, 1971). Insisting on a Marxist (and materialist) critical theory, both reject interpretation and close reading as the primary functions of criticism. Jameson sees such activity as part of the "liberal tradition," whose antispeculative bias encourages "submission to what is by preventing its followers from making connections" (p. x).

Eagleton sees the primary function of criticism as finding a ground outside of literature (scientific) by which to identify the sources to which literature itself must be blind (p. 43). Although sympathetic to these views, in part because of their insistence on a reality to which literature directly connects, I have discovered in the course of this study that the realist-empiricist tradition need not be antispeculative and fragmenting. The ideology lurking in the details of experience and of texts can emerge through the habit of attention and of encouraging the very liberal-humanist tradition of skepticism toward the big idea that may, indeed, lead to "submission." It can also encourage a dialectic between systems and particulars essential to humane and responsible thought. In a sense, this study attempts to trace such a dialectic through a century of fiction.

2. Gerald Graff, *Literature against Itself* (Chicago, 1979), esp. ch. 2. Graff's book appeared after mine was essentially completed. In his assault on the kind of criticism I allude to here, Graff is both detailed and persuasive, and would seem to provide much

ammunition for my position. But in fact I find his lumping of an extraordinary variety of critics together as though they were all saying the same thing for the same reasons disconcerting and unfair. Moreover, salutary as is his attempt to confront this criticism and find a place for realism, he is too ideologically engaged to confront the epistemological substance of the arguments, a substance that challenges the very possibility of his more "humane" alternatives. For a more convincing and intellectually cogent critique of the deconstructionist position as argued by J. Hillis Miller, see William E. Cain, "Deconstruction in America: The Recent Literary Criticism of J. Hillis Miller," *College English* 41 (1979): 367–82. For Miller's most explicit statement on deconstruction, see Harold Bloom et al., *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York, 1979).

3. *The House of Fiction,* ed. Leon Edel (Westport, Conn., 1973), p. 276.

4. "The Place of Realism in Fiction," *Selections Autobiographical and Imaginative from the Works of George Gissing* (London, 1929), p. 221.

5. *The Modes of Modern Writing* (Ithaca, 1977), p. 25.

6. In his now classic *Art and Illusion* (London, 1960), E. H. Gombrich shows how aesthetic appreciation begins only after the art object is pried loose from its practical context (ch. 4); George Lukács argues that "description begins when external things are felt to be alienated from human activity" (see George Lichtheim, *Lukács* [London, 1970], chs. 6, 7).

7. For the classic analysis of this connection, see Harry Levin, *The Gates of Horn* (New York, 1963), esp. pp. 43–48.

8. For an interesting recent attack on the use of generic distinctions in criticism, see Nicolaus Mills, *American and English Fiction in the Nineteenth Century: An Antigenre Critique and Comparison* (Bloomington, Ind., 1973).

9. *The Metaphysical Novel in England and America: Dickens, Bulwer, Hawthorne, Melville* (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 2–3.

10. Eigner prefers to see such syntheses as attempts to discredit the realistic or empirical by means of the metaphysical.

11. "The Science of Fiction," *Life and Art* (New York, 1925), p. 87.

12. See "Periodical Criticism: Reviewers Reviewed. The *Quarterly,*" *Athenaeum,* no. 1, 2 Jan. 1828, p. 11.

13. The word seems to have been borrowed from the French in the 1850s, although the idea of *vraisemblance* was current in the 1840s. See Richard Stang, *The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850–1870* (New York, 1959), p. 145; and two essays to which Stang alludes, R. G. Davis, "The Sense of the Real in English Fiction," *Comparative Literature* 3 (Summer 1951): 200–217, and "Balzac and His Writings," *Westminster Review* 60 (July 1853): 199–214. The latter essay does not seem to assume a naïve realism, but its brief discussion of the term is useful in suggesting the close connection between realism and romanticism.

14. *Fables of Identity* (New York, 1963), p. 36.

15. See, for example, *Studies in European Realism* (New York, 1964). He objects, there, to "exact copying," and sees the great realists as creating "types" in which the fullness of human experience, private and social, is embodied.

16. See J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (New York, 1965) for the best-known recent discussion of the impact of the loss of transcendence on nineteenth-century English literature.

17. Ibid., p. 3.

18. *Past and Present* (Boston, 1965), ch. 2, p. 13.

19. *Sketches by Boz, The Works of Charles Dickens,* Gadshill ed., ch. 1, p. 1.

20. "The Fiction of Realism," *Dickens Centennial Essays* (Berkeley, 1971), p. 124.

21. "Daniel Deronda: George Eliot's Struggle with Realism," in Alice Shalvi, ed., *Daniel Deronda: A Centenary Symposium* (Jerusalem, 1976), p. 92.

22. See, in addition to Gombrich, Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Harmondsworth, 1971).

23. *Critical Essays,* trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, 1972), p. xvii.

24. *Beginnings* (New York, 1975), p. xiii.

25. Leo Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax* (Boston, 1976) sees realism as a strategy to serve society by "containing (and repressing) its disorder within significantly structured stories about itself" (p. 63). I would revise this view by adding that while it struggles to contain what it imagines as monstrous, it also devises the strategies to imagine and release it.

26. Frye, *Fables of Identity,* p. 27.

27. *Mary Barton* (London, 1906), ch. 6, p. 70.

28. Nochlin (*Realism*), in an attempt to modify the arguments of E. H. Gombrich, emphasizes the role played by observation in realistic art in the modifying of conventions.

29. *The Realist Novel in England: A Study in Development* (Pittsburgh, 1974), pp. x, 13.

30. *Problems of Life and Mind* (London, 1890), vol. 1, pp. 113–14.

31. *The Novels of Anthony Trollope* (New York, 1977), p. 40.

32. In an earlier draft of this book I used the word "dialectic" rather than the more general word "process" here and throughout. Because "dialectic" is used with unfortunate looseness and because my own use of it was subject to misinterpretation, I have largely eliminated the word. But what I am trying to convey throughout the book is that "realism" is not static but progressive. Its history is largely a dialectical one. That is, it moves from parody of a discredited literary mode (thesis-antithesis) to a new imagination of the real (in the pattern Levin has described), which might be described as a synthesis. This synthesis, however, quickly is perceived as conventional itself and thus subject to further parody. Part of the problem with the word dialectic here is that the kind of synthesis I am talking about (as we can find it in Conrad and later) is no longer safely called realism. It is another stage of the history of the novel, profoundly informed by the realist impulse, yet no longer realism in the sense that the nineteenth-century novel might be seen as realistic.

33. See *The Sense of an Ending* (New York, 1967). Kermode discusses how, in the writer's attempt to "make sense" of things, it is essential to great art that the "sense" not be too simple. Easy resolutions in narrative become merely "escapist" and unsatisfying.

29

Michael Davitt Bell

From The Development of American Romance

"When a writer calls his work a Romance," declared Nathaniel Hawthorne in his preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), "it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material" (1). Most of Hawthorne's contemporaries associated "romance" with "latitude," with freedom of invention, but they were far from agreement as to the precise nature and purpose of this freedom. "Romance" has many meanings in nineteenth-century American discourse—meanings often mutually contradictory. After Hawthorne's *Seven Gables* preface, the best-known American definition of "romance" is probably that of Henry James, in his preface to the New York edition of *The American* (1909). Both definitions are important, and we should recognize that they are quite different.

In Hawthorne's view, romance is fundamentally an integrative mode. While it allows "latitude" in presenting "circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing," such imaginative play is strictly controlled by what one might call a higher moral realism. The romancer is free to depart from the novelist's obligation of "very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience," but he is admonished to make only "a very moderate use" of these imaginative "privileges." The romance "as a work of art . . . must rigidly subject itself to laws, and [it] sins unpardonably, so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart" (1). For Hawthorne the domain of romance is a world of balance or reconciliation—what he describes in "The Custom-House" (in *The Scarlet Letter*) as "a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (36).

James, on the other hand, characterizes romance in terms of a radical lack of integration between the actual and the imaginary. "The only *general* attribute of projected romance that I can see," he writes, "is the fact of the kind of experience with which it deals—experience liberated, so to speak; experience disengaged, disembroiled, disencumbered, exempt from the conditions that we usually know to attach to it."[1] We must pay attention to what is being said here. "Romance," for James, is less the label of a form or genre than of a kind of experience. Its central "latitude" is psychological.

Like Hawthorne, James cautions against overindulgence of fantasy, but he bases his advice not on the assumption of a higher moral realism (implying a symbolic or metaphorical connection between "fiction" and "truth") but on a concern for the aesthetic or psychological effectiveness of fantasy itself. "The greatest intensity," he argues, "may be so arrived at evidently—when the sacrifice of community, of the 'related' sides of situations, has not been too rash. [Romance] must to this end not flagrantly betray itself; we must even be kept if possible, *for our illusion* [my emphasis], from suspecting any sacrifice at all."[2] The Jamesian romancer may wish to conceal his "sacrifice . . . of the 'related' sides of situations," but it is this "sacrifice," rather than a "meeting" of the actual and the imaginary, that qualifies his work as a "romance." James continues his account with a now-famous metaphor:

> The balloon of experience is in fact of course tied to the earth, and under that necessity we swing, thanks to a rope of remarkable length, in the more or less commodious car of the imagination; but it is by the rope we know where we are, and from the moment that cable is cut we are at large and unrelated. . . . The art of the romancer is, "for the fun of it," insidiously to cut the cable, to cut it without our detecting him.

For James, then, the essence of romance lies in its moral irresponsibility, its severing of those connections or "relations" between imagination and actuality that characterize the mode for Hawthorne. In Hawthorne's view, romance is controlled, serious, moral, and conservative. For James it is an art of pure (if "insidiously" disguised) fantasy, which "more or less successfully palms off on us" a spurious facsimile of experience, "disconnected and uncontrolled."[3]

Modern critics seeking a sense of what American Romantics meant by "romance" have generally turned to the conservative theory of Hawthorne. This theory, discussed in the final section of the present chapter, was important and influential. But it is James—despite the fact that he wrote in the first decade of the twentieth century—who comes closest to the primary meaning of the term in British and American discourse before the Civil War, and one suspects that it was an important function of the conservative theory of romance to obscure this primary meaning. In other words, in spite of the efforts of Hawthorne and others to legitimize the mode through an apologetic of moral symbolism ("relating" illusion to truth, the imaginary to the actual), "romance" meant, first of all, fiction as opposed to fact, the spurious and possibly dangerous as opposed to the genuine.

Romance and Rational Orthodoxy

William Congreve and Clara Reeve, among others in England, gave currency to the "generic" distinction between romance and novel, in terms similar to those Hawthorne used in the *Seven Gables* preface;[4] but English writers generally defined romance in psychological or ethical rather than aesthetic terms, and they went far beyond the formal discrimination of genres to raise questions of intention and effect. As J. M. S. Tompkins describes prevailing British opinion at the end of the eighteenth century:

> "Romance" implied a seductive delusion, pathetic or ludicrous, according to the quality of the victim and the angle of the commentator. . . . To be romantic [was] to prefer the satisfactions of imagination to those of reason.

"Romance" was the term for *any* tale or novel that acknowledged itself to be a work of invention rather than imitation, of "fancy" rather than "reason." "We now use the term *romance,*" wrote Sir Walter Scott in 1827, "as synonymous with fictitious composition."[5]

The same primary connotations obtained in contemporaneous American usage. In 1824, for instance, General William Sullivan declared the facts and scenes of the Revolution "so strange and heroic that they resemble ingenious fables, or the dreams of romance, rather than the realities of authentic history." Or there is the account of the persecution of his sect by the Mormon saint, Parley P. Pratt: "would to God it were a dream—a novel, a romance that had no existence save in the wild regions of fancy." For Pratt, clearly, "novel" and "romance" are virtually synonymous; generic distinction is subordinate to a more basic discrimination between all fiction and actuality. In the same vein, in 1800, Charles Brockden Brown distinguished romance not from the novel but from history. Romance, for him, was not one kind of fiction as opposed to another but all fiction as opposed to fact.[6]

This is the most prevalent distinction in nineteenth-century critical terminology. In an 1836 review of Bulwer's *Rienzi,* Poe discriminated carefully between the author's "scrupulous fidelity to all the main events in the *public* life of his hero" and "the relief afforded through the personages of pure romance which form the filling in of the picture" (7:236). In 1857 Irving informed a correspondent who had inquired about the truth of the personal portions of *The Alhambra:* "Everything in the work relating to myself, and to the actual inhabitants of the Alhambra, is unexaggerated fact. It was only in the legends that I indulged in *romancing.*" Of his campaign biography of Franklin Pierce, Hawthorne wrote nervously in 1852: "though the story is true, yet it took a romancer to do it."[7] And in Melville's *Confidence-Man* the Cosmopolitan replies to Charlie Noble's question about whether the story of Charlemont is "true":

> "Of course not; it is a story which I told with the purpose of every story-teller—to amuse. Hence, if it seem strange to you, that strangeness is the romance; it is what contrasts it with real life; it is the invention, in brief, the fiction as opposed to the fact." (160)

The fundamental property of romance, then, was conceived to be its departure from "truth," from "fact," its cutting of the Jamesian cable tying imagination to "reality." To describe romance in this way was not, finally, to distinguish it from realism or mimesis, for the general run of nineteenth-century comments on romance distinguish it not from *realism* but from *reality*—and this point is crucial. Romance was not an abstract or symbolic representation of objective reality; as we shall see, it was involved with objective representation only when "mingled" with history. Furthermore, even "purely" aesthetic descriptions of romance, defining it in terms of liberated formal experiment,

do not quite coincide with nineteenth-century discussions of the mode. American critics and commentators, at least before Poe, were far less concerned with form itself, with "beauty," than with the sources of imaginative fictional utterance. For them the "unreality" of romance was above all psychological. In Irving's *Tales of a Traveller,* following the burlesque "Adventure of the Popkins Family," a skeptical Englishman condemns the tale as "a mere piece of romance, originating in the heated brain of the narrator" (376). What matters most, then, in nineteenth-century discussions of romance, is neither content nor form but psychological motive and effect.

At the heart of this theory of romance, radically dualistic in its separation of fancy and reason, imagination and actuality, was a profound concern with the origins of fictional (as opposed to historical) rhetoric—origins perhaps masked, "for our illusion," by historical "mingling," but origins nevertheless intensely there. "*My instinct,*" as Melville wrote to his British publisher, John Murray, in 1848, "is to out with the Romance, & let me say that instincts are prophetic, & better than acquired wisdom" (70). To "out with the Romance" was first of all to substitute "instinct" for "acquired wisdom," fantasy for reason. This was the context in which Brown, Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville chose to become "romancers." To "out with the Romance" was, to paraphrase James, to sacrifice the "relation" between the car of imagination and the reality of earth. Romance emanated from, and appealed to, the unfettered imagination, the "heated brain," of narrator or reader. It was therefore both deeply fascinating and deeply subversive.

It was inevitable that the theory of romance should turn, at least initially, on questions of psychology and morality. Well into the nineteenth century it was the consensus of American ministers, moralists, and critics that the writing or reading of imaginative fiction was at best frivolous and usually dangerous. As Thomas Jefferson wrote of what he called "the inordinate passion prevalent for novels":

> When this poison infects the mind, it destroys its tone and revolts it against wholesome reading. Reason and fact, plain and unadorned, are rejected. Nothing can engage attention unless dressed in all the figments of fancy, and nothing so bedecked comes amiss. The result is a bloated imagination, sickly judgment, and disgust towards all the real businesses of life.

Similarly, in a chapter on "Romances and Novels" in his *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (1803), the Reverend Samuel Miller complained that fiction-reading has "a tendency too much to engross the mind, to fill it with artificial views, and to diminish the taste for more solid reading." "To fill the mind with unreal and delusive pictures of life," he insisted, "is, in the end, to beguile it from sober duty, and to cheat it of substantial enjoyment." Fiction and imagination, according to received opinion, were antithetical to and subversive of a whole series of American values: "reason and fact," "the real businesses of life," "sober duty." They were thus regarded with open hostility.[8]

To be sure, this hostility was not uniquely American.[9] Still, historical circumstance and intellectual tradition conspired to make it especially acute in

the new nation. When British fiction emerged at the beginning of the eighteenth century, England already had a long and distinguished heritage of non-utilitarian literature, a heritage notably lacking in the colonies; and by the late 1780s, when Americans were beginning to write novels and romances in significant numbers, England boasted an achieved tradition in fiction in the works of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and their contemporaries. These writers were frequently attacked in England for immorality, although Richardson was largely protected by his alleged concern for promoting and rewarding virtue. But whatever the protests lodged against their works, these men had succeeded; they had established a precedent. Before Cooper and Irving, there were no such exemplary careers in America, with the brief and hardly encouraging exception of Charles Brockden Brown's.

Orthodox American opinion, religious or secular, confronted the aspiring romancer with a set of rationalist axioms—aesthetic, metaphysical, political, and ultimately psychological. Rhetoric was inferior to meaning, possibility to actuality, stimulation to stability, imagination to reason or judgment. Imagination, if not strictly controlled, posed a threat both to individual happiness and to social cohesion. These assumptions, generally pervasive in Colonial America, were particularly so in Puritan New England,[10] and they were reinforced by the spread of Scottish Common Sense philosophy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[11]

Terence Martin has detailed the terms in which Scottish thought denounced fiction, but they are worth summarizing here, since they were also the terms used to discuss fiction in America before the Civil War. Imagination, the Scottish writers agreed, was "naturally" subordinate to judgment or reason, but it was all too easy, as Dugald Stewart warned in 1792, "by long habits of solitary reflection to reverse this order of things, and to weaken the attention to sensible objects to so great a degree, as to leave the conduct almost wholly under the influence of imagination." As an antidote, Stewart recommended—in terms consistently echoed by Irving, Hawthorne, and others—"*mingling* [my emphasis] gradually in the business and amusements of the world." Imagination, Stewart admitted, was the source of sensibility, sympathy, and genius. Unchecked, however, it led the mind into melancholy and even insanity. "To a man of an ill-regulated imagination," he wrote, "external circumstances only serve as hints to excite his own thoughts, and the conduct he pursues has in general far less reference to his real situation, than to some imaginary one in which he conceives himself to be placed." Given these dangerous tendencies, literary encouragement of fantasy was clearly folly. For "those intellectual and moral habits, which ought to be formed by actual experience of the world, may be gradually so accommodated to the dreams of poetry and romance as to disqualify us for the scene in which we are destined to act."[12]

A threat to individual happiness, imagination was also deeply dangerous to social order. "The imagination," wrote Hugh Blair, whose *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) were widely influential in America, "is most vigorous and predominant in youth; with advancing years, [it] cools, and the understanding ripens." More characteristic of youth than of stable maturity, imaginative literature was also more typical of primitive than of modern societies

and partook, therefore, of the other salient quality of youth and barbarism: "In the infancy of all societies," according to Blair, "men are much under the dominion of imagination and passion." "Imagination and passion." That this equation was by 1783 a commonplace does not diminish its importance. There was, as yet, no explicit identification of fantasy with sublimated eroticism, although the idea is implicit in most Scottish-influenced writing and would come very close to the surface in the works of American romancers. But the Scottish philosophers and their American pupils were mainly interested in effects and results, and these, to them, were perfectly clear. "Poetry," in Blair's definition, was "the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination." It was on "understanding" that society had to rely for order and stability. Hence the hysterical fears of orthodox ministers and moralists in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The American Samuel Miller saw the corrupting tendencies of imaginative fiction thus:

> Every opportunity is taken to attack some principle of morality under the title of a "prejudice"; to ridicule the duties of domestic life, as flowing from "contracted" and "slavish" views; to deny the sober pursuits of upright industry as "dull" and "spiritless"; and, in a word, to frame an apology for suicide, adultery, prostitution, and the indulgence of every propensity for which a corrupt heart can plead an inclination.[13]

It is significant that Blair and his contemporaries associated imagination with the very state of society to which Rousseau and his followers appealed for the sanction of their revolutionary doctrines.

One should be cautious in discussing the "influence" of Scottish philosophy in America. It did not so much introduce new attitudes as provide a new and conveniently secular means of supporting what were already firm convictions. For this very reason, the vocabulary it contributed took hold in the United States with extraordinary tenacity, and—what matters here—our writers of fiction were firmly locked in its grasp. Brown expressed his enthusiasm for Blair's *Rhetoric* as early as 1787. Poe, we are told, "knew at first hand Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres,* Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism,* the critical writings of Archibald Alison, Thomas Reid, and especially Dugald Stewart." At Bowdoin, during Hawthorne's undergraduate years, freshmen studied Blair's *Rhetoric* in the third trimester; in the first two terms of the senior year they read through Stewart's *Philosophy.*[14]

It is more difficult to discover the extent of Irving's and Melville's reading in Common Sense philosophy and aesthetics, but the influence of at least the attitudes conveyed by Scottish thought is clear in both.[15] In 1824, for instance, Irving warned a nephew against entering "the seductive but treacherous paths of literature" in thoroughly conventional terms:

> Do not meddle much with works of the imagination—Your imagination needs no feeding, indeed it is a mental quality that always takes care of itself; and is too apt to interfere with the others. Strengthen your judgment; cultivate habits of close thinking, and in all your reading let KNOWLEDGE be the great object.[16]

As for Melville, orthodox condemnation of fiction provided him with one of his major themes. In 1810 the Reverend James Gray, educated in Scotland and very much under the influence of Common Sense thought, warned a young Philadelphia audience against the dangers of fiction:

> Permit me to caution you against ever making the characters of romance a standard by which to judge of character in real life. For . . . perhaps it may be found that no persons are more apt to err and blunder, when introduced on the stage of real life than those whose imaginations have been deeply impressed with the characters of fictitious composition.[17]

Strikingly similar sentiments are expressed briefly by Melville in the guidebook episode in *Redburn* and at length in *Pierre,* in the hero's discovery, after trying to live his life according to literary models, that a work of art, "though a thing of life, was, after all, but a thing of breath, evoked by the wanton magic of a creative hand" (169). Especially close to Gray—although Melville had surely never read his address—is the narrator's question in *The Confidence-Man,* whether "after poring over the best novels professing to portray human nature, the studious youth will still run the risk of being too often at fault upon actually entering the world" (60). It matters not at all, in the final analysis, whether Melville read Gray, or Stewart, or any of the Scottish writers. Their ideas permeated his literary culture; they were inescapable. Romance, first of all, was "fiction" opposed to "fact."

It seems clear, then, that Brown, Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville turned to "romance" in a hostile climate, a climate in which the fictionality of fiction was accentuated and condemned. It is thus not surprising that the primary nineteenth-century meaning of "romance," as pure and dangerous fantasy, played an important part in their thinking about their chosen mode. How, precisely, this climate affected them, how it influenced their choice of vocation and the works they produced, is a complicated matter, to which I shall turn in the next chapter. First, however, it may be useful to consider some other meanings of "romance" in nineteenth-century discourse. These coalesced into what we might call the "conservative" theory of romance, a theory often used to cover up the primary and subversive implications of the term.

The Conservative Theory of Romance

As we have already seen in Hawthorne's preface to *The House of the Seven Gables,* nineteenth-century descriptions of "romance" do not always observe the radical distinction between "fiction" and "fact," but the dualism was overcome only through a deliberate and rather duplicitous defensive strategy. In much nineteenth-century usage the term "romance" is not literary at all but vaguely emotional. Poe, for instance, could speak of the "romance" of Sarah Helen Whitman's character or of the "generous romance of soul" of the mother of Lucretia Maria Davidson (*Letters,* 370; *Works,* 10:222). One attributed (or "related") romance to reality by claiming to find in "real" objects, scenes, or actions qualities associated with literary romance, especially the air of imaginative susceptibility induced or recalled by romantic literature. "Romance," in this sense, was frequently linked with "poetry" which could also be

abstracted from its literal context to connote a vaguely imaginative species of experience. In this vein Irving wrote of a youthful visit to Ogdensburg, New York, fifty years after the fact: "It was all a scene of romance to me, for I was then a mere stripling, and everything was strange, and full of poetry."[18] The same notion lies behind Melville's justification, in the 1848 letter to John Murray, of his decision "to out with the Romance" in *Mardi.* "I have long thought," he wrote, "that Polynisia furnished a great deal of rich poetical material that has never been employed hitherto in works of fancy" (*Letters,* 70).

By attributing to reality itself the "romantic" or "poetic" qualities of subjective imagination, American writers, influenced by associationist aesthetics and by the example of Scott, attempted to bridge the chasm between fantasy and experience, fiction and fact. It is in this sense that we should understand the vogues of historical romance and romantic history. They offered an apparent mode of reconciliation; they provided a rationale for what I have been calling the conservative theory of romance by viewing "romance" as a "historical" or "realistic" mode whose "reality" just happened, luckily, to be "poetic" or "romantic." Poe parrots this conventional argument in an 1835 review of Theodore Irving's *Conquest of Florida:*

> There is so much of romance in the details of Spanish conquests in America, that a history of any one of the numerous expeditions for discovery and conquest, possesses the charm of the most elaborate fiction, even while it bears the marks of general truth. (8:37)

Such apparent reconciliation of historical "fact" and romantic "fiction" could be achieved, however, only in what nineteenth-century writers repeatedly referred to as the "misty past." The more recent past or the present, by their insistent "reality," reopened the chasm between fact and fancy, revealing once again the primary fictionality of romance. Hence Hawthorne's apology in the *Seven Gables* preface for the contemporary setting of his work: "It exposes the Romance to an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism, by bringing [the author's] fancy-pictures almost into positive contact with the realities of the moment" (3). That is to say, it revealed the "neutral territory" for what it really was—a moral or psychological battlefield. But for those who stuck with the "misty past," so the argument went, and blamed the "romance" of their method on their material, there was at least the apparent promise of a permanent cease-fire.

It is at this point that the conservative theory of romance intersects with the debate over the prospects for a national literature. There was a wide variety of opinion about what, precisely, would render our literature national,[19] but the most prevalent conviction regarding literary "Americanism" was that it should and could be based on American materials. As William Gilmore Simms wrote in the preface to his best-known work of fiction: "'The Yemassee' is proposed as an *American* romance. It is so styled as much of the material could have been furnished by no other country."[20] Thus Melville turned, in his masterpiece, to the American whale fishery. Irving mined the past and present of Dutch New York, Hawthorne the past and present of Puri-

tan New England. Cooper chose upstate New York and the wilderness. Already in 1798, at the beginning of his brief career as a romancer, Charles Brockden Brown insisted that "to the story-telling moralist the United States is a new and untrodden field" ("Advertisement for *Sky-Walk,*" 135), and a year later, in his preface to *Edgar Huntly,* he declared that "the field of investigation, opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe" (3).

One of the earliest and most influential organs of American literary nationalism was Boston's *North American Review,* established in 1815. "We have in the way of subjects," William Tudor wrote in the first number, "a rich and various mine that has hardly been opened." He proceeded to list these subjects in the kind of catalogue that would become an almost obligatory feature of the nationalist manifesto, from the *North American* in 1815 to *Leaves of Grass* in 1855. Materials are not themselves art, and these lists are often little more than exercises in defensive chauvinism, insisting that, if we did not have big writers, we at least had big waterfalls. However, the influx of associationist aesthetics during the second decade of the nineteenth century provided a new vocabulary for relating "poetic" qualities to artistic subject matter. Beauty, the associationists argued, is not an absolute; it derives, rather, from the association (especially the traditional, time-honored association) of particular ideas either with each other or with particular objects. The terminology of associationism had become thoroughly commonplace by 1825, when Longfellow proclaimed to his fellow Bowdoin seniors, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, that "whatever is noble and attractive in our national character will one day be associated with the sweet magic of Poetry."[21]

Still, Longfellow's future tense was ominous. The assumptions of associationism were as often used to demonstrate the hopelessness as the hope of a literature based on American materials. At the beginning of *The Sketch-Book* Irving distinguished Europe as the realm of "storied and poetical association" (17). Earlier, in an 1810 essay on Thomas Campbell, the Scottish poet, he explained the problem with America:

> Among the lesser evils, incident to the infant state of our country, we have to lament its almost total deficiency in those local associations produced by history and moral fiction. . . . Our lofty mountains and stupendous cataracts awaken no poetical associations, and our majestic rivers roll their waters unheeded, because unsung. (160–61)

Such complaints were widespread and of long duration. In 1860, in his preface to *The Marble Faun,* Hawthorne was still making the same objection to American materials.

Associationism thus revealed what was wrong with America, but it also suggested a clear procedure for remedying our deficiencies: one might work up native materials by *providing* them with "poetical" associations. One might, as Irving described his intention in the 1848 preface to *Knickerbocker's History of New York,* "clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the old world" (4).

One might, this is to say, Europeanize America. It may be true, as William Hedges argues, that this alleged motive was more important to the Irving of 1848 than to the Irving who wrote the *History,* forty years before; but the cultivation or invention of national associations undoubtedly played a part in his original scheme as well, and there is surely a sense, as Hedges writes, "in which such stories as 'Rip Van Winkle' and 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,' though largely Germanic in origin, are attempts by Irving to equip the American landscape with a kind of mythology."[22] Indeed, the Germanic origin seems part of the point, as if European associations might simply be pasted or grafted onto American scenes.

It was in such terms, in any case, that Irving's American tales and sketches were consistently praised by his contemporaries. Will America, Longfellow asked in 1825, "one day be rich in romantic associations? Will poetry . . . [render] every spot classical?" In the same year, James Kirke Paulding wrote to his friend Irving: "your own country . . . is proud of you, and the most obscure recesses of the land, even old Sleepy Hollow, are becoming almost classical, in consequence of the notice you have taken of them." Or, as Edward Everett wrote ten years later, reviewing Irving's *Tour on the Prairies:* "We thank [the author] for turning these poor barbarous *steppes* into classical land." Associationism was thus crucial to literary nationalism. It provided an aesthetic justification and method for the exploitation of national materials, not only for Irving but for many of his contemporaries and successors, notably Hawthorne.[23]

While the associationist program seemed to validate a literature based on national materials, it did not propose a literature otherwise radically different from the literature of Europe—different, that is to say, in kind or form. This is why Irving's admirers praised him for making "barbarous" America "classical." American materials were to be made amenable to the literary imagination, but that imagination was not, in itself, conceived in distinctly "American" terms. In a society nervous about "art," associationist aesthetics allowed the skittish to talk about materials rather than about the creative process. It was in this sense that associationism served to rationalize the theory of American fiction.

If associationist thought was crucial to the theory of nationalism, it was equally crucial to the conservative theory of romance—the theory that attempted to make peace with rational orthodoxy by denying the more insidious implications of romancing. By connecting or "mingling" imaginary ideas with "real" materials, associationist aesthetics promised simultaneously to validate those materials for literature and to overcome the essential disrelation of romance. American writers, by attributing to reality itself the "charms" of "romance and poetry," seemed able to overcome romance's primary sacrifice of relation. They seemed able to bridge the chasm between fantasy and "real" experience, between fiction and fact. Thus an "American romance"—a romance based, through association, on American materials—would be safe and conservative, firmly anchored to the rock of "solid and substantial" native reality. Even as it endowed America with "poetical associations," it would, as Hawthorne put it again and again, reconcile the "Imaginary" and the "Actual."

This conservative rationale for national romance was widespread in American critical discourse in the first half of the nineteenth century. It ap-

pears regularly in prefaces to romantic histories and historical romances and in reviews of such works. In purely quantitative terms it should probably be considered *the* theory of American romance, but as a theory of romantic fiction it was not really tenable, at least not for those who kept in mind the primary meaning of "romance" in the nineteenth century. The problem was that fictions based so firmly on native materials might be national but would hardly be romances.

James Kirke Paulding, in his 1820 essay on "National Literature," argued for the possibility of "romantic fiction" in America based solidly on native "materials for romantic adventure," but his definition smacks far more of what his contemporaries called the "novel" than it does of the "romance":

> The best and most perfect works of imagination appear to me to be those which are founded upon a combination of such characters as every generation of men exhibits, and such events as have often taken place in the world and will again. Such works are only fictions because the tissue of events which they record never perhaps happened in precisely the same train and to the same number of persons as are exhibited and associated in the relation.[24]

It is surely difficult to distinguish Paulding's confinement of the *romancer* to "such characters as every generation of men exhibits, and such events as have often taken place in the world and will again," from Hawthorne's limitation of the *novelist,* in the *Seven Gables* preface, "not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience" (1).

The point to be stressed about Paulding's deemphasis of fictionality is not that he was a realist before his time but that for him a literature based on national materials was necessarily realistic, being based not on unfettered imagination but on a rational judgment of the typical and representative. What Paulding ignores, in following the logical implications of conservative nationalism, is that radical meaning of "romance" that pervades the warnings of critics and moralists at the beginning of the century. And it is hard to fault Paulding's logic. If national romance grew out of native materials, it was no longer primarily the product of the author's "over-heated imagination." For all its overtones of imaginative coloring and sentiment, the theory of conservative romance, based on associationist aesthetics and ultimately on American "reality," was finally a theory of realism, of rational mimesis.

Many commentators agreed with Paulding about the necessity of realism in American romance, but they were far less happy about it than he was. They saw this realism as a major problem—a problem traceable to the alleged deficiency of our literary materials. In 1827 an anonymous writer in the *American Quarterly Reveiw* gave utterance to one of the staple complaints of nineteenth-century American criticism:

> Strictly speaking, there has been no dark or romantic age, in this country, *connected* [my emphasis] with its European race. The adventures, the sufferings, the conflicts, of our forefathers, besides being of a recent date, all partook of severe reality. . . .

> Our history and tradition consequently connect themselves but awkwardly with every thing supernatural, or out of the ordinary course of nature.[25]

There is a logical fallacy in this complaint. "Novelistic" qualities of "severe reality" or allegiance to "the ordinary course of nature"—which would result from *any* method that bases art on the materials of art—are here attributed not to the method but to the materials. This fallacy was widespread in American critical discourse. The problem was not just the absence, in American scenery and history, of "storied and poetical association." More generally, America was seen as lacking the sort of relation that conservative romance required—and that European "reality" supposedly possessed—between material circumstance and imaginative experience. In America, to put it bluntly, one couldn't blame one's "fiction" on one's "facts."

The consequences of this situation for the American romancer, as critics and commentators outlined them, were quite contradictory, and this may explain why twentieth-century critics have trouble deciding whether romancers thought American conditions made romance inevitable or impossible.[26] On the one hand, many writers complained that romance-writing in America was, if not quite impossible, then at least extremely difficult. This is what Hawthorne means in his preface to *The Marble Faun* when he laments that "it will be very long before romance-writers may find congenial and easily handled themes either in the annals of our stalwart Republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives" (3). What he means is that conservative romance—the sort of integrative, "related" romance linked with Europe—will be impossible in America. We don't yet have enough "reality" that is already "romantic."

On the other hand, in its primary sense of fiction as opposed to fact, "romance" was perhaps made inevitable by the supposed dissociation of imagination and actuality in America. After all, the primary sense of "romance" grew out of that dissociation in the first place. Perhaps the inevitable corollary of barren American "reality"—bereft of all association—was the romancer's imagination, unanchored, floating "at large and unrelated." This is the conclusion reached by the anonymous writer in the *American Quarterly Review* in his pessimistic comment on the favorite associational strategy of conservative romancers:

> The infusion of romance into history, cannot, we think, but have a bad effect on the reader, by rendering the dull matter of fact of the latter, tasteless and spiritless, in comparison with the piquant extravagance of the adulterated mass, and weakening at the same time that salutary distinction, which the mind should always preserve between truth and falsehood. The imagination ought not to be pampered thus, at the expense of the other faculties.[27]

The passage is intriguing in its assumption that a radically divided sensibility is a sign of mental health. But this assumption was widespread. The reviewer's "salutary distinction" is, of course, the distinction upon which Common Sense psychology insisted, and it lay at the heart of the primary definition of "ro-

mance" as fiction as opposed to fact. Indeed, the reviewer's second sentence precisely echoes the warnings of ministers and moralists against the dangers of fiction and fantasy. Conservative romancers loved to complain about the barrenness of American materials, but their real problem, it would seem, lay not in the nature of American "reality" but in the way they were disposed to see the relation—or lack of relation—between *all* "reality" and the imagination.

Most popular or conventional national romance in pre–Civil War America was written on the explicit or implicit assumption that the sacrifice of relation could be overcome or evaded because certain native materials were already imbued with "storied and poetical association" or could be so imbued. To ignore this body of American romance would be to ignore a major portion of our literary history: Cooper, Simms, Sedgwick, and a host of others. Furthermore, the program of those who based the hope of American literature on national materials was quite antithetical to the primary implications of "romance"—the implications surveyed in the first section of this chapter. Nevertheless, in the failures and contradictions of the conservative program lurked the very sense of "romance" that the program seemed designed to evade. If "European" romance was finally impossible in America, perhaps only the sort of romance against which moralists inveighed could be truly "American."

Washington Irving, whose very lack of critical originality makes him a valuable index of conventional thought, meticulously cultivated the interface between romance and history. If he sometimes anticipates Hawthorne's idea of the "neutral territory," we should not be surprised; for like Hawthorne, he, too, sought relation in literature. Thus he wrote to John Murray (his English publisher and the father of Melville's) about his desire, in *The Conquest of Granada,* "to assume a greater freedom & latitude in the execution of the work, and to mingle a tinge of romance and satire with the grave historical details."[28] Just as often, he attributed such "mingling" not to the author but to his material. Thus Geoffrey Crayon, in "Westminster Abbey" (in *The Sketch-Book*), describes a crusader's tomb, musing on "those military enthusiasts, who so strangely mingled religion and romance, and whose exploits form the connecting link between fact and fiction; between the history and the fairy tale" (137).

But there is an important difference between Irving and the Hawthorne of "The Custom-House" and the *Seven Gables* preface. For the former, romance is not itself the neutral territory but one of the forces contesting the field—the fiction or "fairy tale" as opposed to the fact or history. Even as he sought modes of reconciliation, Irving always kept the fictionality of romance in view; and in this he is closer than Hawthorne to the primary meaning of "romance" in nineteenth-century America—a meaning still very much alive at mid-century. "Proceeding in my narrative of *facts,*" Melville wrote to *his* John Murray in 1848, explaining his new purpose in *Mardi,* "I began to feel an incurible distaste for the same; & a longing to plume my pinions for a flight, & felt irked cramped & fettered by plodding along with dull common places,—So suddenly [abandoning] the thing alltogether, I went to work heart & soul at a romance." Which, he assures his less than delighted publisher, "shall

afford the strongest presumptive evidence of the truth of Typee & Omoo by the sheer force of contrast" (70).

• • • •

In the mature work and thought of Hawthorne and Melville the development of experimental American romance comes to its culmination and conclusion. The present study of this development might thus conceivably end with chapter 6—with the intersection of romance's disrelation and Romanticism's decadence in Hawthorne's allegorical and Melville's symbolistic fiction. The two chapters that follow are not meant to imply any further development along the lines discussed thus far. Rather, they examine the ways in which Hawthorne and Melville exploited the dilemmas of the romancer to understand what they saw as an analogous dilemma facing the national experiment.

The focus of Part Three is thus no longer solely on the romancer's social and literary strategies for exploiting or obscuring the sacrifice of relation (although I am still concerned with such strategies), for in the work of Hawthorne and Melville it is also necessary to explore the ways in which they consciously employed the psychological and aesthetic disrelation of romance as a model for comprehending what they saw as an analogous disrelation in the culture of their nation—a dissociation of nineteenth-century "America" from its allegedly "revolutionary" spiritual origins.

In parts One and Two I set forth the theory and practice of experimental American romance in the context of the romancers' experience—as "romancers"—of their culture. This context is crucial. Still, these writers were not "American" simply by virtue of being products, in a sociological sense, of their society, for they were often, in addition, social critics, social visionaries, or both. Hawthorne and Melville, particularly, undertook self-consciously to embody and examine in their fiction what they took to be the peculiar nature of their America. In Part Three, then, I am concerned with Hawthorne's and Melville's visions of America, of its culture and history.

I shall contend, moreover, that these visions depend in some significant measure on a different sort of connection between "American romance" and "America" than that discussed in the first six chapters. Instead of focusing on the sociological connection between writer and society, I shall explore a more explicitly literary connection, in works of literature, between social vision and criticism, on the one hand, and fictional theory and practice, on the other. To what extent, I ask, were Hawthorne and Melville able to make the form of romance itself, the fundamental disrelation of romance, into an instrument of social vision and social criticism?

To raise such a question is to run the risk Hawthorne might have described as entering a "fairy-land" or "cloud-land" of abstraction. The interaction between romance and cultural vision, between the theory of romance and theories of society and social history, is not the concrete "interaction" of the sociologist, for in a sociological sense it is scarcely "real" at all. The sociologist of literary vocation links fictions or theories of fiction, as examples of interactive social behavior, with the concrete conditions, the "facts," faced by au-

thors; but to link a writer's theory of romance to his theory of society is to link an idea to an idea, a fiction to a fiction.

The all-important reason for exploring this admittedly abstract sort of interaction between the dilemmas of experimental romance and what Hawthorne and Melville saw as the dilemmas of the national experiment is the fact that such an interaction—whether "real" or not—is an explicit and important concern in the major American romances of these two writers. In other words, the self-conscious investigation of literary expression in their works is often simultaneously an investigation of the nature and meaning of "America." I have no desire to assert a "real" connection between the nature of nineteenth-century America as a culture and the nature of romance as a literary form. There are, as we shall see, intriguing similarities between problems raised by a certain kind of nationalist thought and the problems raised by experimental romance, but they are significant to the present study mainly as they engaged the attention of Hawthorne and Melville.

The call for a distinctively national American literature first arose, in the years during and following the Revolution, in the context of a general anxiety among American intellectuals to define or discover the distinctive identity of "America."[29] The nationalists' call was first answered, as we now read our literary history, by the emergence of a significant and enduring body of American literature in the years between 1820 and 1860. This was also the great age of American romance. Indeed, many of our first important national writers were also avowed romancers. This historical coincidence has led to the notion that there is a fundamental affinity between the idea of "romance" and the ideal of a distinctive "America" that was enunciated in nationalist propaganda between the Revolution and the Civil War.

The most forceful and extended assertion of such an affinity is to be found in the work of Perry Miller. At the heart of Miller's writings on American romance is the identification of romance with its subject matter and, ultimately, with the very idea of "America." Thus, in "The Romance and the Novel," Miller tells us that the romances of Cooper, Simms, and their contemporaries "were serious efforts to put the meaning of America, of life in America, into the one form that seemed providentially given, through the exemplum of Scott, for expressing the deepest passions of the continent"; similarly, in *The Raven and the Whale,* the romance is "that form in which Young America sought to prove their Americanism." The "philosophical doctrine of the romance" is thus virtually equated with the doctrine of American cultural nationalism, and the equation becomes, under the pressure of Miller's rhetoric, even deterministic. Melville turned to romance in *Mardi,* we are told, because his nationalist ambition could take only that form. National originality, Miller writes, could not be achieved "in the novel, not by Jane Austen, Bulwer, or Thackeray. . . . The great American book had to be big, and it had to be a romance."[30]

As historical analysis, Miller's asserted equation simply does not work. It drains the terms "America" and "romance" of any precise meaning. In what sense, for instance, can the American "continent" be said to have had "pas-

sions"? And by identifying "romance" almost completely with its American subject matter, with the rhetoric of national originality, Miller obscures the primary importance to this mode of literary expression of a central conception of the problems and possibilities of fictional *form*.[31] The truth is that American romance, except as it "mingled" American scenery and history with "poetry," was in no direct sense a response to, let alone an embodiment of, the call for a distinctively national literature or identity. As developed by Brown, Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville, its "philosophical doctrine" grew, not out of self-conscious nationalism, but out of a set of ingrained assumptions about the nature and status of romance and romancers in a society hostile to both. While these assumptions may have been especially pronounced and monotonic in America, they were hardly uniquely American. The particular forms taken by American romance may have been psychologically and socially determined by the interaction between the romancer and his culture, but it is hardly useful to describe them as "providentially given."

However much American intellectual and popular culture exacerbated the opprobrium of fictionality and hence encouraged the growth of a self-consciously "fictional" tradition in America, this self-consciousness was not in any obvious way distinctively "American." National propagandists called for the literary treatment of specifically national scenes, institutions, and history or, more vaguely, for independence from foreign models. Experimental romance, by contrast, reflects more general or universal concerns: about the relation (or disrelation) between imagination and actuality, fiction and fact, "sentiments" and "words."

There is, nevertheless, a kind of potential, metaphorical truth in Miller's asserted equation. From a certain perspective, questions of "relation" seemed as relevant to the nationalists' ideal of the nation's ambitions as to the specifically literary project of experimental romance. The Revolution and its aftermath, for those who thought about them in a certain way, posed problems intriguingly similar to the problems of the self-conscious romancer. As early as 1815 Walter Channing worried, as would so many of his contemporaries and successors, about the difficulty of finding an appropriate mode in which to express our distinctive nationality—whatever that "nationality" was. "How tame will his language sound," Channing complained, "who would describe Niagara in language fitted for the falls at London bridge, or attempt the majesty of the Mississippi in that which was made for the Thames."[32] In this view, the Revolution had, as it were, sacrificed the relation between the "language" of imported culture and those "revolutionary" canons of legitimacy that for some nationalists constituted the new "idea" of America. Ours was a new sort of truth, one for which we as yet had no words; and the invention or discovery of such words was central to the general nationalist imperative. From that point of view, the central problem of the new nation, like the central problem of romance, was one of expression, of finding valid words and forms for otherwise inarticulate sentiments.

I do not introduce this comparison of the problems facing nationalists and romancers to reinstate Miller's identification of the "romance" with "America." It is only a comparison, a metaphor—an analogy not even between

fiction and actual cultural experience but between a certain kind of fiction and a certain *idea* of the nature or potential of American culture. It matters, however, because it mattered to our two greatest romancers. Hawthorne and Melville perceived, and exploited, a seeming affinity between the style of their medium and the style of their culture. Both styles presented problems that might be called "formal," and both pointed, ultimately, beyond themselves to a "truth" conceived in "revolutionary" terms.

In 1789 Charles Brockden Brown launched his literary career with a series of four periodical essays entitled *The Rhapsodist.* "I intend," he announced in the first number, "that the sincerity of my character shall be the principal characteristic of these papers. . . . I speak seriously, when I affirm that no situation whatsoever, will justify a man in uttering a falsehood" (1). In the year of Washington's first inauguration, the year of the storming of the Bastille in France, Brown spoke for the emerging Romantic cult of sincerity over calculation, of abstract justice over social custom and habit, of truth over artificial form. Such sentiments were thoroughly conventional, but Brown went on to associate this nascent Romanticism, in a way that was also becoming conventional, with the new American character and its literary expression. His essays recall various European writers of visionary sensibility, but the Rhapsodist avers that he owes his true inspiration to his home in the American wilderness, on "the solitary banks of the Ohio" (15).

Sixty-one years later, reviewing Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse,* Herman Melville still located the literary genius of America on the "banks of the Ohio" (409) and still associated that genius with the doctrine of sincerity, "the great Art of Telling the Truth" (408). Like Brown, although writing in widely different circumstances, Melville was influenced by the ideals of Rousseau and the French *philosophes,* by their desire to liberate a pure humanity smothered beneath the corrupt and deceptive forms of literature and culture. Like Brown also, he saw these ideals as being particularly appropriate to the United States. "No American writer," he declared, "should write like an Englishman, or a Frenchman; let him write like a man, for then he will be sure to write like an American" (413). The Rhapsodist, Brown's persona had insisted, "will write as he speaks, and converse with his reader not as an author, but as a man" (5). In both of these nationalistic essays the rejection of European formalism verges on a theoretical repudiation of form altogether—in the interest of American truth. The American writer defines himself simply as a "man." His literature is characterized simply by its "truth."

This claim of radical sincerity, whatever its sources in European Romanticism, was for Brown and Melville and many of their contemporaries particularly appropriate to what they saw as the "revolutionary" origins of American culture. The Puritans, themselves no friends to formal artifice in art and literature, had fled England in order to free scriptural truth from the corrupt formalism of the Church of England. A century and a half later Jefferson's *Declaration* had justified American independence on the basis of "self-evident" truths. In the years following the Revolution national propagandists insisted that the revolutionary impulse should permeate our whole culture—its social

institutions, art, and literature—not just our political life. American culture, they declared, should assert its own independence by being revolutionary and sincere, expressing American truth rather than foreign influence. "Even Shakespeare," Melville wrote to Evert Duyckinck in 1849, "was not a frank man to the uttermost. And, indeed, who in this intolerant Universe is, or can be? But the Declaration of Independence makes a difference" (80).

It is hard to assess the historical significance of this ideal of America's peculiar identity and potential. Historians have long debated whether the nation born in 1776 was especially new or was rather an institution of long-established local customs and political realities. Such things as the "difference" upon which Melville insisted are difficult to quantify. Nor was the idea of America as a bastion of sincerity in the war against corrupt artifice uniformly accepted in pre–Civil War America, even among avowed nationalists. For many propagandists, America's special character was to be found not in some abstract spirit but in concrete institutions, scenery, local tradition, and history. As I noted in chapter 1, a good deal of "Americanist" cultural propaganda was fundamentally conservative and concretely "realistic." Moreover, the most important strain of nationalist thought, in historical terms, was probably not "cultural" at all but specifically political, focusing on such issues as internal economic development and the power of the federal government. The more radical conception of America's distinctive character, voiced by Brown and Melville, was only one idea among several.

Nevertheless, this idea was widespread, and it played an important part in the intellectual life of the new nation. It is the central doctrine, for instance, of William Ellery Channing's "Remarks on a National Literature," first published as a review in 1830:

> The great distinction of our country is, that we enjoy some peculiar advantages for understanding our own nature. Man is the great subject of literature, and juster and profounder views of man may be expected here than elsewhere. In Europe, political and artificial distinctions have, more or less, triumphed over and obscured our common nature.

The same idea informs Emerson's 1837 Phi Beta Kappa address, "The American Scholar," and it was generally embraced by those of Channing's Transcendental heirs who, as Benjamin Spencer puts it, "enlisted in the campaign for a national literature principally as an operation in behalf of a new freedom which they judged to be more nearly in accord with universal truth."[33]

In this view, America's nationality lay not in its history and scenery, not even in the concrete institutions established by the Revolution, but in the Revolution itself—in the originating "revolutionary" impulse. "We should have no heart to encourage native literature," wrote Channing in 1830, "did we not hope that it would become instinct with a new spirit."[34] Radical nationalism, that is to say, shifted the basis of national identity from matter to spirit, from phenomenal appearances ("artificial distinctions," for Channing) to noumenal essences. The idea of "America" was finding a new grounding in the doctrines of Romantic spiritualism. It was in such terms that Brown, in 1789, and Melville, in 1850, proclaimed their sense of America's literary and cultural mission.

Channing called for the overthrow of "artificial distinctions," for the release and revelation of "our common nature." The author of "psychological romance," writes Hawthorne in his Preface to *The Snow-Image,* burrows "into the depths of our common nature" (4). The reappearance of Channing's phrase is significant, for the supposedly revolutionary "truth" of America and the non-verbal "truth" of romance were at heart one and the same. In romance as in revolution, "our common nature" was to be liberated from imprisoning form. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, we recall, conventional opinion associated "romance and poetry" with the same "barbaric" condition, the state of nature, to which Rousseau and others appealed to justify revolution.

One may wonder whether romancers were actually moved by this sort of intellectual-historical congruence. Still, they had, perhaps, a direct and personal reason for sensing an affinity between the impulse of revolution and the obscure sources of their art. I argued in chapter 2 that a feeling of marginality or deviance, even of aggression against society and its norms, played a part in the romancer's experience and choice of his vocation. Would not the theory of justified revolution, legitimized at last by our submerged "common nature," provide the ultimate deviant rationale? Few of our experimental romancers were willing openly to proclaim such a rationale.

Brown never treated the American Revolution directly. He did begin his career as a Godwinian radical, but in his fiction the "revolutionary" characters—notably Ormond—are invariably the villains,[35] and in the years following his renunciation of fiction-writing Brown also renounced his early radicalism for the more "solid" values of Federalism. In a political pamphlet of 1809 he explicitly renounced the notion of "revolutionary" legitimacy, and did so in interesting terms. "The impulse," he wrote of the American Revolution, "was a movement of the imagination."[36]

Poe simply ignored the Revolution, just as he generally ignored the idea of Americanism and, indeed, the idea of history. There are rebellions and uprisings in his fiction, treated with a mixture of fear and fascination. One thinks of such works as *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,* "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," "Hop-Frog," "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether." Many of these tales draw on Poe's hostility to popular democracy and his Southern fear of black rebellion. In many of them rebellion is associated with the escape of imagination from rational control, and in this sense one might describe the central action of "The Fall of the House of Usher"—Madeline's emergence from the basement—as a kind of rebellion; but in none of these stories is revolution introduced as a *sanction* for the imaginative unfettering of "our common nature."

Irving also avoided the Revolution and the revolutionary but did so in ways that sometimes give them a kind of negative prominence. The change through which Rip Van Winkle happily sleeps is, significantly, the War for Independence. Brom Bones frightens off Ichabod Crane by impersonating the ghost of a Hessian mercenary. In both of these stories, sleepy Dutch complacency stands in opposition to alienation and violence, and it is suggestive that the insanity of Gottfried Wolfgang, the German Student, is tied specifically

to the revolution in France. Irving's conservative contemporaries liked to distinguish our Revolution from the one in France. Our War for Independence, they argued, was not "revolutionary" at all. Yet it is only by sleeping through America's Revolution that Rip Van Winkle is enabled to avoid Gottfried's fate.

The truth is that, except for Melville in the 1840s, American romancers found the affinity between romance and revolution anything but gratifying. We should not be surprised. However important a sense of deviance may have been to these writers, they spent most of their public careers trying to "manage" this deviance, to channel the energy of alienation or aggression into the acceptable forms of "solid" success. For such men, one imagines, the idea of revolution—especially if associated with their own status or motives as artists—must have been touchy. In fact, when the affinity between the "truths" of romance and revolution comes into focus in the works of these romancers, it does so only briefly—and evidently as a notion to be obscured or evaded.

Writers like Hawthorne and Melville, perhaps through the experience of managing their own aggressive impulses, had a sense of "our common nature" quite different from Channing's. The deepest "revolutionary" imperatives, as they understood them, were not beatific but antisocial, irrational, and violent. Jefferson might have based America's Revolution on "truths" we hold to be "self-evident," but the author of "The Birth-mark" knew that toward the deepest truth of our nature "we practise an unconscious self-deception during our waking moments" (40). It was against precisely such "self-deception" that Channing and Emerson protested, but Hawthorne understood how deeply we need it. So did Melville, who said, in "Hawthorne and His *Mosses,*" that the deepest truths are "so terifically true that it were all but madness for any good man, in his own proper character, to utter, or even hint of them" (407). If Hawthorne and Melville recognized such "truths" within themselves, they were scarcely pleased, consciously at any rate, to do so. Experienced in managing their own deviant impulses, they were peculiarly sensitive to the ways in which "civilized" culture generally, and the culture of "revolutionary" America in particular, subsisted through an analogous sort of management.

Notes

1. Henry James, *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James,* ed. Richard P. Blackmur (New York: Scribner's, 1934), p. 33.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., pp. 33–34.

4. See Congreve's preface to *Incognita* (1692); see also Reeve's *The Progress of Romance* (1785) (reprint, New York: Facsimile Text Society, 1930), esp. pp. 110–11.

5. J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800* (London: Constable, 1932), p. 210; Sir Walter Scott, "On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition," in Ioan Williams, ed., *Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 314.

6. General William Sullivan, "Address of the Bunker Hill Monument Association to the Selectmen of the Several Towns in Massachusetts," in George Washington Warren, *The History of the Bunker Hill Monument Association . . .* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1877), p. 85; Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book

Co., 1938), p. 227; Charles Brockden Brown, "The Difference between History and Romance," *The Monthly Magazine and American Review* 2 (1800): 251–53.

7. Washington Irving, in Pierre M. Irving, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving* (New York: Putnam, 1864), vol. 4, p. 236; Hawthorne, quoted in Randall Stewart, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 133.

8. Thomas Jefferson to Nathaniel Burwell, Mar. 14, 1818, in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Putnam, 1899), vol. 10, pp. 104–5; Samuel Miller, *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: T. J. Swords, 1803), vol. 2, pp. 179, 176. For further discussions of hostility toward fiction and imagination in early America, see William Charvat, *The Origins of American Critical Thought, 1810–1835* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936); G. Harrison Orians, "Censure of Fiction in American Romances and Magazines, 1789–1810," *PMLA* 52 (1937): 195–214; and, especially, Terence Martin, *The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961).

9. See, for instance, Tompkins, "The Stirring of Romance, and the Historical Novel," in *The Popular Novel in England,* esp. pp. 210–17. Clara Reeve's *Progress of Romance* was mainly intended to combat hostility toward imaginative fiction in England, giving respectability to romance by associating it with the ancient epic; and Scott's various critical writings testify to his sense of the abiding suspicion of fiction in England in the early nineteenth century.

10. See, for instance, Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), esp. pp. 257–60. Miller contends, among other things, that "Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams were banished from Massachusetts Bay because they were altogether too gifted with imagination" (p. 259).

11. On the pervasiveness of Common Sense thought in America see, for instance, Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1951), p. 236; Herbert W. Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), pp. 246–50; and Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 355–56. The Scottish School was founded by Thomas Reid. Far more influential in America, and considerably more interested in the function of imagination (which Reid largely dismisses), were Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), Archibald Alison's *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), and Dugald Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792).

12. Martin, *Instructed Vision;* Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (Boston: Wells & Lilly, 1821), vol. 1, pp. 276–78.

13. Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (Philadelphia: James Kay, 1844), pp. 72, 66, 421; Miller, *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century,* vol. 2, p. 175.

14. William Dunlap, *The Life of Charles Brockden Brown* (Philadelphia: James P. Parke, 1815), vol. 1, p. 27; Edd Winfield Parks, *Edgar Allan Poe as Literary Critic* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), p. 10; Randall Stewart, *Nathaniel Hawthorne,* pp. 16–17.

15. Irving had undoubtedly been exposed to Scottish aesthetics and psychology by the time he wrote *The Sketch-Book.* In 1817 he was introduced into the literary circles of Edinburgh, and as early as 1810, in an essay on Thomas Campbell, he took note of Dugald Stewart's favorable opinion of the poet (148). Melville entered the Albany Academy in 1830, where the English textbook was Murray's *English Reader,* three-fourths of which consisted of writings by Blair; in 1835 he was admitted to the Albany Young Men's Association, whose library would have made the standard Scottish writers available to him (see William H. Gilman, *Melville's Early Life and "Redburn"* [New York: New York University Press, 1951], pp. 55, 73–74).

16. Irving, *Letters, Volume II, 1823–1838,* ed. Ralph M. Aderman, Herbert L. Kleinfield, and Jenifer S. Brooks (Boston: Twayne, 1979), p. 84.

17. James Gray, quoted in Martin, *Instructed Vision,* p. 67.

18. *Life and Letters of Washington Irving,* vol. 4, p. 157.

19. The most complete study of American literary nationalism, although it does not attempt to measure the effect of literary propaganda on the nature of American literary achievement, is Benjamin T. Spencer's *The Quest for Nationality: An American Literary Campaign* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1957). See also Robert E. Spiller's excellent collection of primary materials, *The American Literary Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967); Spiller, *The Third Dimension: Studies in Literary History* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Harry Hayden Clark, "Nationalism in American Literature," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 2 (1933): 429–519; E. K. Brown, "The National Idea in American Criticism," *Dalhousie Review* 14 (1934): 133–47; William Ellery Sedgwick, "The Materials for an American Literature: A Critical Problem of the Early Nineteenth Century," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 17 (1935): 141–62; John J. McCloskey, "The Campaign of Periodicals after the War of 1812 for National American Literature," *PMLA* 50 (1935): 262–73; Robert W. Bolwell, "Concerning the Study of Nationalism in American Literature," *American Literature* 10 (1939): 405–16; and Earl L. Bradsher, "The Rise of Nationalism in American Literature," in Nathaniel M. Caffee and Thomas A. Kirby, eds., *Studies for William A. Read* (University, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1940), pp. 269–87.

20. William Gilmore Simms, *The Yemassee: A Romance of Carolina* (1835), ed. C. Hugh Holman (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 6.

21. Tudor, *North American Review* 1 (1815): 120; see Robert E. Streeter, "Association Psychology and Literary Nationalism in the *North American Review,* 1815–1825," *American Literature* 17 (1945): 243–54; Longfellow, "Our Native Writers," in Spiller, ed., *American Literary Revolution,* p. 387.

22. William Hedges, *Washington Irving: An American Study, 1802–1832* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), pp. 114–15.

23. Longfellow, "Our Native Writers," p. 387; James Kirke Paulding, quoted in *Life and Letters of Washington Irving,* vol. 2, p. 239; Edward Everett, in *North American Review* 41 (1835): 14. On the importance of associationist aesthetics to Hawthorne's handling of historical materials, see Michael Davitt Bell, *Hawthorne and the Historical Romance of New England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 197–200.

24. Paulding, "National Literature," in Spiller, ed., *American Literary Revolution,* pp. 381–82.

25. *American Quarterly Review* 2 (1827): 42, 43.

26. Richard Chase, for instance, concludes from the *Marble Faun* preface that "Hawthorne was . . . convinced . . . that romance, rather than the novel, was the predestined form of American narrative" (*The American Novel and Its Tradition* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957], p. 18). Yet Hawthorne's overt point in that preface, as Nicolaus Mills rightly observes, is "his assertion of how difficult it is to write a romance in America" (*American and English Fiction in the Nineteenth Century* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973], p. 25).

27. *American Quarterly Review* 2 (1827): 46.

28. Irving, *Letters, Volume II,* p. 415.

29. For a listing of discussions of American nationalist thought, see above, n. 19.

30. Perry Miller, "The Romance and the Novel," *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 245, and *The Raven and the Whale: The War of Words and Wits in the Era of Poe and Melville* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), pp. 339, 257.

31. One might compare John Caldwell Stubbs' objection, to a similar emphasis in Joel Porte's *The Romance in America,* that while he "treats the theme of exploration of the wilderness, either geographical or psychological, . . . Porte does not occupy himself much with the *form* of the romance" (*The Pursuit of Form: A Study of Hawthorne and the Romance* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970], p. 4n).

32. Walter Channing, "Essay on American Language and Literature," *North American Review* 1 (1815): 309.

33. William Ellery Channing, "Remarks on a National Literature," in Spiller, ed., *American Literary Revolution,* p. 362; Spencer, *Quest for Nationality,* p. 175. It might be objected that to stress America's revolutionary origins is to exaggerate the extent to which the War for Independence was in fact "revolutionary." This question has vexed historians for two centuries, and I have no wish, here, to join their fray. But whatever its causes, the Revolution—the deliberate and successful defiance of British authority—clearly *fostered* a "revolutionary" temper or at least a generalized crisis of legitimacy. As Bernard Bailyn has summarized the matter: "In no obvious sense was the American revolution undertaken as a social revolution. No one, that is, deliberately worked for the destruction or even the substantial alteration of the order of society as it had been known. Yet it was transformed as a result of the Revolution. . . . What did now affect the essentials of social organization—what in time would help permanently to transform them—were changes in the realm of belief and attitude" (*The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972], p. 302. It is in this realm of "belief and attitude," particularly respecting attitudes toward traditional canons of legitimacy, that the Revolution would seem most profoundly to have affected the thinking of American writers and intellectuals about the nature of "America," and it matters little whether such changes in attitude were caused, or simply made manifest, by the successful War for Independence. What does matter is that such attitudes of skepticism or distrust were associated by our writers, whether favorably or unfavorably, with the origins of the new nation and its culture. The Revolution, as Bailyn puts it, encouraged the faith "that a better world than any that had ever been known could be built where authority was distrusted and held in constant scrutiny" (ibid., p. 319). Even in the absence of such faith, the distrust endured.

34. William Ellery Channing, "Remarks on a National Literature," p. 364.

35. Ormond's sister, Martinette de Beauvais, has participated in the American Revolution dressed in male clothing. These patriotic associations do not, however, make her any less a match for her brother in disinterested bloodthirstiness. Constantia asks her: "Does not your heart shrink from the view of a scene of massacre and tumult, such as Paris has lately exhibited and will probably continue to exhibit?" "Have I not been three years in a camp?" Martinette answers, alluding to her American experience. "What are bleeding wounds and mangled corpses, when accustomed to the daily sight of them for years? Am I not a lover of liberty? and must I not exult in the fall of tyrants, and regret only that my hand had no share in their destruction?" (170–71).

36. Charles Brockden Brown, *An Address to the Congress of the United States, on the Utility and Justice of Restrictions upon Foreign Commerce* . . . (Philadelphia: C. & A. Conrad, 1809), p. iv. The importance of this pamphlet as an index of Brown's intellectual transformation is discussed in ch. 5, "Anarchia, A Species of Insanity," of Arthur Kimball's *Rational Fictions: A Study of Charles Brockden Brown* (McMinnville, Ore.: Linnfield Research Institute, 1968).

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Part Eleven

Photography, Film, and the Novel

From Benjamin and Lévi-Strauss to Anderson and Banfield, theorists of the novel have argued the centrality of literacy and print to the formation of the genre. How has the novel been affected by the innovations in the technology of cultural production entailed in photography and cinema?[1]

In 1925 Ortega y Gasset wondered if the new science of psychology had outmoded the novel, or, alternatively, given it a new lease on life (*Notes,* above, pt. 5). If traditional genres became "novelized" by the newest genre, does the novel in turn become not only "psychologized" but also "photographized" in the later nineteenth century? Have the new technologies sponsored a new category of narrative, whether or not acknowledged by a new terminology?

The immediate context in which Henry James responds to these questions is as instructive as the response itself. Like the other prefaces to the New York edition of his works, the preface to *The Golden Bowl* reflects upon that novel as an earlier composition now subject to a self-consciously revisionary perspective. In the process, the idea of "revision" is thematized and conjugated in a characteristically Jamesian fashion. He begins the preface by remarking on his inveterate habit of providing the reader "a certain indirect and oblique view of my presented action" through "some more or less detached . . . witness or reporter . . . , some other conscious and confessed agent" whose perspective enriches "the mere muffled majesty of irresponsible 'authorship.'" James's language in description of such characters is redolent of the psychological, perspectival, and especially the visual figures that dominate the theory of novelistic distance. In the novel at hand, the prince has the dual status of subject and object, narrator and character, that is familiar in free indirect discourse: "Having a consciousness highly susceptible of registration, he thus makes us see the things that may most interest us reflected in it as in [a] clean glass . . . ; and

1. Charles Baudelaire's conviction that photography should not be permitted to affect the fine arts was buttressed by his belief that typography had had a neglible influence on literature: "If photography is allowed to supplement art in some of its functions, it will soon have supplanted or corrupted it altogether. . . . It is time, then, for it to return to its true duty, which is to be the servant of the sciences and arts—but the very humble servant, like printing or shorthand, which have neither created nor supplemented literature." *Art in Paris 1845–1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions. Reviewed by Charles Baudelaire,* trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 154 (salon of 1859).

yet after all never a whit to the prejudice of his being just as consistently a foredoomed, entangled, embarrassed agent in the general imbroglio."

"So much," says James, "for some only of the suggestions of re-perusal here." Passing for a moment to the end of our excerpt from the preface, James tries here to engage that more difficult sense of reperusal implied in his present project of revising an old text for a new edition. This involves the confrontation of subject with object at another level, the level where James's current "intelligence" of the text "as a reader" confronts his original activity as its "historian." Minimal enough for recent compositions, this potential revisionary disjunction is actualized for older productions "thanks to the so frequent lapse of harmony between my present mode of motion and that to which the existing footprints were due." Mustn't "the searching radiance of drawing-room lamps" require a thoroughgoing revision of what had been composed by "nursery candles"? Yet the difficulty evaporates when James, setting to work, recalls that "to revise is to see, or to look over, again—which means in the case of a written thing neither more nor less than to re-read it." The fact of disjunction becomes "my very terms of cognition." As in the opening passage, competition and conflict are transvalued through a meditation on the meaning of "revision."

Sandwiched between these two passages is James's bemused reflection on the status of the "illustrations," which "reproduce" original "photographs," that his publisher proposed to print alongside the republished novels. Here is yet another revisionary competition. The "question of the general acceptability of illustration [comes] up sooner or later, in these days, for the author of any text putting forward illustrative claims (that is producing an effect of illustration) by its own intrinsic virtue and so finding itself elbowed, on that ground, by another and a competitive process. . . . Anything that relieves responsible prose of the duty of being, while placed before us, good enough, interesting enough and, if the question be of picture, pictorial enough, above all *in itself,* does it the worst of services, and may well inspire in the lover of literature certain lively questions as to the future of that institution."

But competition implies rivalry for identical and unsharable ends, whereas the ends of photography and novel-writing are analogous and complementary. Illustration carries "its text in its spirit, just as that text correspondingly carries the plastic possibility." "[T]he proposed photographic studies . . . , discreetly disavowing emulation," are rather "images always confessing themselves mere optical symbols or echoes, expressions of no particular thing in the text, but only of the type or idea of this or that thing." In other words, photography, like the novel, is a realism—it distills the instance from the type—and James visualizes for us novelist and photographer ("my fellow artist") stepping out into the vast, hermeneutic circularity of Edwardian London to find the empirical object whose nature coalesces through the act of looking for it. "[W]e had, not to 'create' but simply to recognize—recognize, that is, with the last fineness." Permeated by the metaphor of vision and revision, the empirical epistemology of the novel meets photography on already familiar ground.

The second of Walter Benjamin's essays reprinted in this anthology is concerned with issues so closely related to those of the first (with which it is exactly contemporary) that their striking differences are what most immedi-

ately command our attention. Like "The Storyteller," "The Work of Art" is preoccupied with the way changes in the technology of cultural production affect the arts. However, here the question concerns not the relation of typography to narrative, but "whether the very invention of photography ha[s] not transformed the entire nature of art." The novel enters this question in a significantly tangential way. We live in one of those epochs "in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form." Dadaism used conventional technologies to take "pictorial" and "literary" means as far as they could go. The modern novel doesn't figure in this essay, it would seem, because the effects to which it aspires are fully obtainable only through the new technology of film. And yet the intimate relation between the early modern rise of the novel and the modern rise of film is inescapable. Narrating the long history of cultural production that culminates in cinema, Benjamin remarks that "print is merely a special, though particularly important, case." And summarizing the consequences for literate culture of "the increasing extension of the press," he concludes that "[a]ll this can easily be applied to the film, where transitions that in literature took centuries have come about in a decade." Given the plausibility of conceiving film as a radical extension of the novel, why does Benjamin instead seem to insist on their essential discontinuity?

The historicizing heart of Benjamin's famous argument is too familiar to require more than summary treatment. "Imitation," the first form of artistic reproduction, is nonetheless qualitatively different in its implications from "mechanical reproduction." The unique and original work of art is "imbedded in the fabric of tradition"; "the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition." The existential aura of traditional art "is never entirely separated from its ritual function" (wherein lies its "cult" or "use value"), nor from its "fixed place"; reproduced art, alienable from its original locale, possesses not cult but "exhibition value" in service not to a "ritual" but to a "political" function.

What's remarkable here is, first, the basic consistency of Benjamin's historical argument with much that has been written (including by Benjamin himself) about the transition from traditional narrative to novelistic distance. But second, his assessment of this transition differs so markedly from the normative tone of "The Storyteller" as to suggest affinities not with the devolutionary Lukács and Lévi-Strauss but with the evolutionary Bakhtin and Watt. True, the social significance of film, "particularly in its most positive form, is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic aspect, that is, the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage."[2] Still, the destructive loss of the freedom entailed in collective experience, nostalgically emphasized in "The Storyteller," is here replaced by the celebration of the negative freedom gained through detachment: "[F]or the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual." How can we explain this discrepancy between the two essays?

2. Compare Lévi-Strauss's relatively uncharacteristic moment of equilibrium in "How Myths Die," above, ch. 7.

One factor, no doubt, is the difference between literate and visual media. How is this related to the difference between the first essay's more or less unrelievedly devolutionary view of the modern period and the second essay's proleptic articulation of it? In the first, modernity is marked by the synchronous ascendancy of the novel, the printing press, and "fully developed capitalism." The second essay is framed as a prognostication of the nature of art after the abolition of capitalism, and the entire argument is shot through with this anticipatory illumination. In "The Work of Art," the modern period takes form as a concatenation of radical and dynamic crises. In the first crisis, the ritual function of art is "secularized" in the Renaissance "cult of beauty," and the "authenticity" of the art object is complicated by notions of "empirical uniqueness." This is presumably the period of developing (if not fully developed) capitalism; although he doesn't use the terminology, Benjamin's "secularized ritual" would seem to complete the Marxist sequence from ritual fetish to commodity fetish. The second crisis of modernity is therefore also the crisis of capitalism: of the simultaneous advent of socialism and "the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography"; of the emancipation of labor from exploitation and "the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual." This is the point at which, "instead of being based on ritual, [art] begins to be based on another practice—politics."

The organizing transition in "The Storyteller" is that from the traditional "community" to the modern "solitary individual." In "The Work of Art," modernity, more immanently and hopefully, is figured instead as a modernization of community and embodied in "the masses." At the moment in which Benjamin writes, the choice is not between socialism and capitalism (between "politics" and "ritual") but between antithetical modes of mass politics, socialism and fascism. Not that capitalism has simply withered away; rather, it's the stealthy engine of fascism. In traditional culture, politics and aesthetics are distinguishable but inseparable. The first crisis of modernity, that of the secularization of ritual, marks the historical moment at which politics and aesthetics separate out from each other and attain autonomous standing. The second crisis of modernity generates two alternative strategies for overcoming this division through the self-conscious conflation of the now separate categories: the socialist ("communist") politicizing of art and the fascist aestheticizing of politics. Socialism renders formal relations material: it abolishes private property. Fascism renders material relations formal: it makes war beautiful.

In producing "cult" and "ritual values," Benjamin implies, the fascist method of overcoming division recurs to the capitalist stage: "[T]he aura is abolished in a new way." Fascism is fetishistic: it objectifies the human ("human material") and humanizes the object. So if fascism prevails, the crises of capitalism fail to produce an alternative to it, and the great scheme of historical diachrony conforms in the end to the basic, two-part periodization of tradition versus (capitalist) modernity. In such a case, the chronology of cultural production is similarly divided between the traditional technology of unique and original art works and the modern technology of mechanical reproduction, which capaciously incorporates, as the superstructural counterpart to capitalism, not only lithography and print but also photography and film. To cast

our lot with socialism, however, entails expanding historical diachrony to include an innovative third period defined by the synchrony of infrastructural socialism and its revolutionary superstructural use of photography and film.

But Benjamin's polarization of postcapitalist socialism and neocapitalist fascism, grounded in their respective uses of the new visual technologies, may well appear too sanguine sixty years later. The "revolutionary" principles of mechanical reproduction, although they "brush aside a number of outmoded concepts," seem to ensure others a continuing if unremarked existence. Mechanical reproduction, by alienating and transporting cult objects for exhibition and consumption, distills from the "unique" object a "sense of the universal equality of things." What is this if not the distillation of exchange value produced by the circulation of commodities? Figuring the futurity of mechanical reproduction through normatively antithetical instances of avant-garde or modernist art—Dadaism and Futurism—does Benjamin overlook its "true" consummation in advertising?[3]

Benjamin's impulse to expand the two-part historical diachrony owes to his view that a continuous and unrelieved modernity bespeaks the relatively unmediated and monolithic influence of (infrastructural) capitalist production over (superstructural) mechanically produced art. However, what if we attend not only to the similarity but also to the difference entailed in the historical synchrony of infra- and superstructure? What if we inquire not into the presumed continuity of infrastructure but into the observable continuity of superstructure; not the suppositional future of capitalist production but the discoverable past of mechanically produced art; not the inexorable coextension of industrial and advanced capitalism but the evident links between literate and visual media, between the novel, photography, and film?

True, the visual media confront the mass audience, Benjamin says, in a way that literate media never can do. Film in particular facilitates a "simultaneous collective experience." It reconciles the individualistic "critique" of art with its collective "enjoyment" by folding the former into the latter as its predetermined determinant. Film encourages not (like painting) the "concentration" whereby the individual is absorbed by the work of art but the "distraction" on which depends the absorption of the work of art by the masses. Distraction is achieved in part by the fact that "the camera continually changes its position" in a way that "accommodate[s] the pervasion of reality by the apparatus." The "illusionary," "equipment-free aspect of reality" we see on *viewing* a film is a direct result of the fact that in *shooting* the film "in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated . . . deeply into reality." "The camera intervenes" to give us the "unconscious optics" of slow motion and the close-up.

This last insight emerges through a comparison of film and psychoanalysis: "The film has enriched our field of perception with methods which can be illustrated by those of Freudian theory" and its disclosure of multiple and rela-

3. Benjamin's utopianism in this respect anticipates that of poststructuralist theory in its postulation of modernity's three-part periodicity: see above, headnote to pt. 10, and below, headnote to pt. 13. In Marxism's projection of the third stage, socialism, as the renovated communitarianism of "the masses" we may also see a version of the "neotraditionalism" that grounds the expansion of two to three periods in some projects of the novel tradition.

tive "points of view." And this comparison, it's worth noting, explicitly justifies a general continuity between visual and nonvisual media that's also relevant to the specific comparison of film and the novel. The comparison is compelling enough: between the "simultaneity" of the mass audience and that of the reading public's imagined community;[4] between the "distraction" of the audience and the detachment of the novel reader; between the perspectival and subjectivizing mobility of the camera and that of the novelistic narrator. More generally, the comparison is one between technology and technique. That changes in the technology of cultural production have played a fundamental role in the history of artistic forms isn't to be questioned. But technological determinism—a sub-category of infrastructural determinism—overlooks how innovations in technique, ultimately indebted to technological change, may yet evolve so as to anticipate and affect the future of technology. Approached from the perspective of free indirect discourse, cinematic "point of view" might even appear a crude literalization of the subtle efficiency with which narrative had learned long since to temporalize and narrativize the perspectival techniques of painting.[5]

Like Siskin and the Lukács of *The Historical Novel,* Keith Cohen propounds a period discourse, but one marked by a trans-media as well as by a trans-generic "convergence." On the one hand, film is "blatantly" but superficially indebted to the novel for its contents; on the other hand and more fundamentally, the modern novel borrows its formal technique from film. This view of the inter-formal relation between the two media is predicated on a by-now-familiar view of the novel genre's formal development. The "realist" tradition of the nineteenth century had been committed to a "transparency" effect whereby "an inflexibly omniscient, authoritative narrator" emphasized narration over description, "telling" over "showing." The (tautologically) "innovative novelists" of modernism, seeking "to lay bare the process of fiction by inserting a highly self-conscious narrator," "reversed" this emphasis by "foregrounding the apparatus of production."[6] Cohen therefore argues a double discontinuity. Cinema exhibits the qualities of hybridity and amalgamation attributed by other theorists to the novel, and the novel's innovative technologies, script and print, are naturalized as "données of the human spirit": "cinema is the only truly *invented* art."

Cohen's account of cinematic epistemology becomes rather less absolute

4. See Anderson, above, Ch. 17.

5. Bertolt Brecht's reflections (*Brecht on Theatre,* ed. John Willett [New York: Hill and Wang, 1964], 47–48) on the influence of the cinematic apparatus are uncharacteristically shortsighted: "Once instruments are used even the novelist who makes no use of them is led to wish that he could do what the instruments can: to include what they show (or could show) as part of that reality which constitutes his subject-matter; and above all, when he writes, to assume the attitude of somebody using an instrument. . . . [I]t makes a great difference whether the writer approaches things as if using instruments, or produces them 'from within himself.'" The technique of writing from within oneself might instructively be seen as an internalization of typographical technology, hence as assuming the attitude of somebody using an instrument.

6. With Cohen's claim that "the cinematic experience is impossible without a simultaneous experience of its apparatus—at least of the projector" contrast Benjamin, "Work of Art," below, ch. 31.

than these passages suggest. Film does not only foreground the apparatus; it combines the "flat," "impressionist" tendencies of this effect with the "naturalist" "depth" effects achieved by its moving images. The result is a "paradoxical" "synthesis" of "contradictory world-views." The modernist novel learns—to be sure from its predecessors, but more crucially from cinema—the characteristically dialectical oscillation that Cohen summarizes under three headings. The technique of parallel editing achieves the effect of "simultaneity," which "translates the interdependence of space and time into a unified, seemingly continuous dimension."[7] "Multiperspectivism" names "[t]he power of the movies to present diverse viewpoints of the same object or action," the power to choose "that angle of vision by which the moving figure define[s] most dynamically its field of activity." "Montage," originally "the industrial assembly of finished products from individual parts," retains that dialectical relation of whole and parts, syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes, diachrony and synchrony, chronology and diegesis, that justifies Cohen's view of its effect as one of "discontinuous continuity."[8]

André Bazin argues the other side of the question. Opening out the prehistory of the cinema, his endorsement of the proportionality whereby the novel is to cinema as the traditional genres were to the novel (indeed, the novel is now one of the "traditional arts") assumes a dialectical continuity between each successive stage in the progression. In fact, film has had the complex status of foundling or bastard in relation even to the classical genre of drama (as the novel once did to epic and romance). For Bazin, technological invention is of considerably less importance to cinema[9] than is a precedent and more pervasive "technical civilization" to the novel. Not only film's content, but also its formal technique, is indebted to novelistic influence. This is true whether we refer to the cinematic oscillation between objective and subjective points of view, or to "the techniques of a narrative born of montage and change of camera position." "The novel it is that has made the subtlest use of montage." With the contemporary avant-garde, in fact, we find films taking "their inspiration from a novel-like style one might describe as ultracinematographic."

Bazin's historicizing perspective encourages him to question not only the technical novelty claimed for film, but also the norm of novelty by which that claim is sustained. Adaptation, borrowing, and imitation continue to be crucial to the history of art even if modernity learns to devalue them. Oddly enough,[10] cinema was least indebted to traditional art forms in its earliest

7. Compare Anderson on novelistic technique, above, ch. 17.

8. Cohen's comprehensive emphasis on discontinuity well exemplifies the tendency, already noted, by which a given novel theory will endorse analogous macro- and micro-versions of temporality—that is, analogous plots for history and narrative (see above, headnote to pt. 2).

9. Bazin explicitly argues the secondary importance to cinema of "technical inventions" in "The Myth of Total Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?,* trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 17–18.

10. Or is this the paradoxical rule for modern forms? Compare the novel's earliest efforts to model itself not on traditional literary genres but on an epistemological ideal of "true history": see McKeon, "Generic Transformation" (above, ch. 15, pace Siskin, "Natural Results," above, ch. 25).

years, acknowledging the influence only later on.[11] But the "faithful" cinematic adaptation of novels need entail neither a deforming "novelization" of film nor a deforming "cinematization" of the novel: "it is wrong to present fidelity as if it were necessarily a negative enslavement to an alien aesthetic."[12] Like James, Bazin stresses not "competition or substitution" in the relationship between the two forms and media, but a common ground of "technical civilization" and a common cause in the reciprocal rejuvenation of "the public." It remains to be seen whether the revolutionary change in the mode of cultural production entailed in the electronic technology of information processing competes with, or substitutes for, what we recognize as novelistic form.

11. Bazin's discussion of how the serial film adopted the technique of the *roman feuilleton* suggestively complicates Lévi-Strauss's account of that form as seriality devoid of structure (*Origin,* above, ch. 7).

12. Compare Lukács and Bakhtin on novelization (see above, headnote to pt. 6).

30

Henry James

From Preface *to* The Golden Bowl

Among many matters thrown into relief by a refreshed acquaintance with *The Golden Bowl* what perhaps most stands out for me is the still marked inveteracy of a certain indirect and oblique view of my presented action; unless indeed I make up my mind to call this mode of treatment, on the contrary, any superficial appearance notwithstanding, the very straightest and closest possible. I have already betrayed, as an accepted habit, and even to extravagance commented on, my preference for dealing with my subject-matter, for "seeing my story," through the opportunity and the sensibility of some more or less detached, some not strictly involved, though thoroughly interested and intelligent, witness or reporter, some person who contributes to the case mainly a certain amount of criticism and interpretation of it. Again and again, on review, the shorter things in especial that I have gathered into this Series have ranged themselves not as my own impersonal account of the affair in hand, but as my account of somebody's impression of it—the terms of this person's access to it and estimate of it contributing thus by some fine little law to intensification of interest. The somebody is often, among my shorter tales I recognize, but an unnamed, unintroduced and (save by right of intrinsic wit) unwarranted participant, the impersonal author's concrete deputy or delegate, a convenient substitute or apologist for the creative power otherwise so veiled and disembodied. My instinct appears repeatedly to have been that to arrive at the facts retailed and the figures introduced by the given help of some other conscious and confessed agent is essentially to find the whole business—that is, as I say, its effective interest—enriched *by the way.* I have in other words constantly inclined to the idea of the particular attaching case *plus* some near individual view of it; that nearness quite having thus to become an imagined observer's, a projected, charmed painter's or poet's—however avowed the "minor" quality in the latter—close and sensitive contact with it. Anything, in short, I now reflect, must always have seemed to me better—better for the process and the effect of representation, my irrepressible ideal—than the mere muffled majesty of irresponsible "authorship." Beset constantly with the sense that the painter of the picture or the chanter of the ballad (whatever we may call him) can never be responsible *enough,* and for every inch of his surface and note of his song, I track my uncontrollable footsteps, right and left, after the fact, while they take their quick turn, even on stealthiest tiptoe, toward the point of view that, within the compass, will give me most instead of least to answer for.

I am aware of having glanced a good deal already in the direction of this embarrassed truth—which I give for what it is worth; but I feel it come home to me afresh on recognizing that the manner in which it betrays itself may be one of the liveliest sources of amusement in *The Golden Bowl.* It's not that the muffled majesty of authorship doesn't here *ostensibly* reign; but I catch myself again shaking it off and disavowing the pretense of it while I get down into the arena and do my best to live and breathe and rub shoulders and converse with the persons engaged in the struggle that provides for the others in the circling tiers the entertainment of the great game. There is no other participant, of course, than each of the real, the deeply involved and immersed and more or less bleeding participants; but I nevertheless affect myself as having held my system fast and fondly, with one hand at least, by the manner in which the whole thing remains subject to the register, ever so closely kept, of the consciousness of but two of the characters. The Prince, in the first half of the book, virtually sees and knows and makes out, virtually represents to himself everything that concerns us—very nearly (though he doesn't speak in the first person) after the fashion of other reporters and critics of other situations. Having a consciousness highly susceptible of registration, he thus makes us see the things that may most interest us reflected in it as in the clean glass held up to so many of the "short stories" of our long list; and yet after all never a whit to the prejudice of his being just as consistently a foredoomed, entangled, embarrassed agent in the general imbroglio, actor in the offered play. The function of the Princess, in the remainder, matches exactly with his; the register of *her* consciousness is as closely kept—as closely, say, not only as his own, but as that (to cite examples) either of the intelligent but quite unindividualized witness of the destruction of *The Aspern Papers,* or of the all-noting heroine of *The Spoils of Poynton,* highly individualized *though* highly intelligent; the Princess, in fine, in addition to feeling everything she has to, and to playing her part in that proportion, duplicates, as it were, her value and becomes a compositional resource, and of the finest order, as well as a value intrinsic. So it is that the admirably endowed pair, between them, as I retrace their fortune and my own method, point again for me the moral of the endless interest, endless worth for "delight," of the compositional contribution. Their chronicle strikes me as quite of the stuff to keep us from forgetting that absolutely *no* refinement of ingenuity or of precaution need be dreamed of as wasted in that most exquisite of all good causes the appeal to variety, the appeal to incalculability, the appeal to a high refinement and a handsome wholeness of effect.

There are other things I might remark here, despite its perhaps seeming a general connection that I have elsewhere sufficiently shown as suggestive; but I have other matter in hand and I take a moment only to meet a possible objection—should any reader be so far solicitous or even attentive—to what I have just said. It may be noted, that is, that the Prince, in the volume over which he nominally presides, is represented as in comprehensive cognition only of those aspects as to which Mrs. Assingham doesn't functionally—perhaps all too officiously, as the reader may sometimes feel it—supersede him. This disparity in my plan is, however, but superficial; the thing abides rigidly by its law of showing Maggie Verver at first through her suitor's and her hus-

band's exhibitory vision of her, and of then showing the Prince, with at least an equal intensity, through his wife's; the advantage thus being that these attributions of experience display the sentient subjects themselves at the same time and by the same stroke with the nearest possible approach to a desirable vividness. It is the Prince who opens the door to half our light upon Maggie, just as it is she who opens it to half our light upon himself; the rest of our impression, in either case, coming straight from the very motion with which that act is performed. We see Charlotte also at first, and we see Adam Verver, let alone our seeing Mrs. Assingham, and every one and every thing else, but as they are visible in the Prince's interest, so to speak—by which I mean of course in the interest of his being himself handed over to us. With a like consistency we see the same persons and things again but as Maggie's interest, *her* exhibitional charm, determines the view. In making which remark, with its apparently so limited enumeration of my elements, I naturally am brought up against the fact of the fundamental fewness of these latter—of the fact that my large demand is made for a group of agents who may be counted on the fingers of one hand. We see very few persons in *The Golden Bowl,* but the scheme of the book, to make up for that, is that we shall really see about as much of them as a coherent literary form permits. That was my problem, so to speak, and my *gageure*[1]—to play the small handful of values really for all they were worth—and to work my system, my particular propriety of appeal, particular degree of pressure on the spring of interest, for all that this specific ingenuity itself might be. To have a scheme and a view of its dignity is of course congruously to work it out, and the "amusement" of the chronicle in question—by which, once more, I always mean the gathered cluster of all the *kinds* of interest—was exactly to see what a consummate application of such sincerities would give.

So much for some only of the suggestions of re-perusal here—since, all the while, I feel myself awaited by a pair of appeals really more pressing than either of those just met; a minor and a major appeal, as I may call them: the former of which I take first. I have so thoroughly "gone into" things, in an expository way, on the ground covered by this collection of my writings, that I should still judge it superficial to have spoken no word for so salient a feature of our Edition as the couple of dozen decorative "illustrations."[2] This series of frontispieces contribute less to ornament, I recognize, than if Mr. Alvin Langdon Coburn's beautiful photographs, which they reproduce, had had to suffer less reduction; but of those that have suffered least the beauty, to my sense, remains great, and I indulge at any rate in this glance at our general intention for the sake of the small page of history thereby added to my already voluminous, yet on the whole so unabashed, memoranda. I should in fact be tempted here, but for lack of space, by the very question itself at large—that question of the general acceptability of illustration coming up sooner or later, in these days, for the author of any text putting forward illustrative claims (that is producing an effect of illustration) by its own intrinsic virtue and so finding itself elbowed, on that ground, by another and a competitive process. The essence of any representational work is of course to bristle with immediate images; and I, for one, should have looked much askance at the proposal, on the part of my associates in the whole business, to graft or "grow," at whatever point, a

picture by another hand on my own picture—this being always, to my sense, a lawless incident. Which remark reflects heavily, of course, on the "picture-book" quality that contemporary English and American prose appears more and more destined, by the conditions of publication, to consent, however grudgingly, to see imputed to it. But a moment's thought points the moral of the danger.

Anything that relieves responsible prose of the duty of being, while placed before us, good enough, interesting enough and, if the question be of picture, pictorial enough, above all *in itself,* does it the worst of services, and may well inspire in the lover of literature certain lively questions as to the future of that institution. That one should, as an author, reduce one's reader, "artistically" inclined, to such a state of hallucination by the images one has evoked as doesn't permit him to rest till he has noted or recorded them, set up some semblance of them in his own other medium, by his own other art—nothing could better consort than *that,* I naturally allow, with the desire or the pretension to cast a literary spell. Charming, that is, for the projector and creator of figures and scenes that are as nought from the moment they fail to become more or less visible appearances, charming for this manipulator of aspects to see such power as he may possess approved and registered by the springing of such fruit from his seed. His own garden, however, remains one thing, and the garden he has prompted the cultivation of at other hands becomes quite another; which means that the frame of one's own work no more provides place for such a plot than we expect flesh and fish to be served on the same platter. One welcomes illustration, in other words, with pride and joy; but also with the emphatic view that, might one's "literary jealousy" be duly deferred to, it would quite stand off and on its own feet and thus, as a separate and independent subject of publication, carrying its text in its spirit, just as that text correspondingly carries the plastic possibility, become a still more glorious tribute. So far my invidious distinction between the writer's "frame" and the draftsman's; and if in spite of it I could still make place for the idea of a contribution of value by Mr. A. L. Coburn to each of these volumes—and a contribution in as different a "medium" as possible—this was just because the proposed photographic studies were to seek the way, which they have happily found, I think, not to keep, or to pretend to keep, anything like dramatic step with their suggestive matter. This would quite have disqualified them, to my rigor; but they were "all right," in the so analytic modern critical phrase, through their discreetly disavowing emulation. Nothing in fact could more have amused the author than the opportunity of a hunt for a series of reproducible subjects—such moreover as might best consort with photography—the reference of which to Novel or Tale should exactly be *not* competitive and obvious, should on the contrary plead its case with some shyness, that of images always confessing themselves mere optical symbols or echoes, expressions of no particular thing in the text, but only of the type or idea of this or that thing. They were to remain at the most small pictures of our "set" stage with the actors left out; and what was above all interesting was that they were first to be constituted.

This involved an amusing search which I would fain more fully commem-

orate; since it took, to a great degree, and rather unexpectedly and incalculably, the vastly, though but incidentally, instructive form of an enquiry into the street-scenery of London; a field yielding a ripe harvest of treasure from the moment I held up to it, in my fellow artist's company, the light of our fond idea—the idea, that is, of the aspect of things or the combination of objects that might, by a latent virtue in it, speak for its connection with something in the book, and yet at the same time speak enough for its odd or interesting self. It will be noticed that our series of frontispieces, while doing all justice to our need, largely consists in a "rendering" of certain inanimate characteristics of London streets; the ability of which to suffice to this furnishing forth of my Volumes ministered alike to surprise and convenience. Even at the cost of inconsistency of attitude in the matter of the "grafted" image, I should have been tempted, I confess, by the mere pleasure of exploration, abounding as the business at once began to do in those prizes of curiosity for which the London-lover is at any time ready to "back" the prodigious city. It wasn't always that I straightway found, with my fellow searcher, what we were looking for, but that the looking itself so often flooded with light the question of what a "subject," what "character," what a saving sense in things, is and isn't; and that when our quest was rewarded, it was, I make bold to say, rewarded in perfection. On the question, for instance, of the proper preliminary compliment to the first volume of *The Golden Bowl* we easily felt that nothing would so serve as a view of the small shop in which the Bowl is first encountered.

The problem thus was thrilling, for though the small shop was but a shop of the mind, of the author's projected world, in which objects are primarily related to each other, and therefore not "taken from" a particular establishment anywhere, only an image distilled and intensified, as it were, from a drop of the essence of such establishments in general, our need (since the picture was, as I have said, also completely to speak for itself) prescribed a concrete, independent, vivid instance, the instance that should oblige us by the marvel of an accidental rightness. It might so easily be wrong—by the act of being at all. It would have to be in the first place what London and chance and an extreme improbability should have made it, and then it would have to let us truthfully read into it the Prince's and Charlotte's and the Princess's visits. It of course on these terms long evaded us, but all the while really without prejudice to our fond confidence that, as London ends by giving one absolutely everything one asks, so it awaited us somewhere. It awaited us in fact—but I check myself; nothing, I find now, would induce me to say where. Just so, to conclude, it was equally obvious that for the second volume of the same fiction nothing would so nobly serve as some generalized vision of Portland Place. Both our limit and the very extent of our occasion, however, lay in the fact that, unlike wanton designers, we had, not to "create" but simply to recognize—recognize, that is, with the last fineness. The thing was to induce the vision of Portland Place *to* generalize itself. This is precisely, however, the fashion after which the prodigious city, as I have called it, does on occasion meet halfway those forms of intelligence of it that *it* recognizes. All of which meant that at a given moment the great featureless Philistine vista would itself perform a miracle, would become interesting, for a splendid atmospheric hour,

as only London knows how; and that our business would be then to understand. But my record of that lesson takes me too far.

So much for some only of the suggestions of re-perusal, and some of those of re-representation here, since, all the while, I feel myself awaited by an occasion more urgent than any of these. To re-read in their order my final things, all of comparatively recent date, has been to become aware of my putting the process through, for the latter end of my series (as well as, throughout, for most of its later constituents) quite in the same terms as the apparent and actual, the contemporary terms; to become aware in other words that the march of my present attention coincides sufficiently with the march of my original expression; that my apprehension fits, more concretely stated, without an effort or a struggle, certainly without bewilderment or anguish, into the innumerable places prepared for it. As the historian of the matter sees and speaks, so my intelligence of it, as a reader, meets him halfway, passive, receptive, appreciative, often even grateful; unconscious, quite blissfully, of any bar to intercourse, any disparity of sense between us. Into his very footprints the responsive, the imaginative steps of the docile reader that I consentingly become for him all comfortably sink; his vision, superimposed on my own as an image in cut paper is applied to a sharp shadow on a wall, matches, at every point, without excess or deficiency. This truth throws into relief for me the very different dance that the taking in hand of my earlier productions was to lead me; the quite other kind of consciousness proceeding from *that* return. Nothing in my whole renewal of attention to these things, to almost any instance of my work previous to some dozen years ago, was more evident than that no such active, appreciative process could take place on the mere palpable lines of expression—thanks to the so frequent lapse of harmony between my present mode of motion and that to which the existing footprints were due. It was, all sensibly, as if the clear matter being still there, even as a shining expanse of snow spread over a plain, my exploring tread, for application to it, had quite unlearned the old pace and found itself naturally falling into another, which might sometimes indeed more or less agree with the original tracks, but might most often, or very nearly, break the surface in other places. What was thus predominantly interesting to note, at all events, was the high spontaneity of these deviations and differences, which became thus things not of choice, but of immediate and perfect necessity: necessity to the end of dealing with the quantities in question at all.

No march, accordingly, I was soon enough aware, could possibly be more confident and free than this infinitely interesting and amusing *act* of re-appropriation; shaking off all shackles of theory, unattended, as was speedily to appear, with humiliating uncertainties, and almost as enlivening, or at least as momentous, as, to a philosophic mind, a sudden large apprehension of the Absolute. What indeed could be more delightful than to enjoy a sense of the absolute in such easy conditions? The deviations and differences might of course not have broken out at all, but from the moment they began so naturally to multiply they became, as I say, my very terms of cognition. The question of the "revision" of existing work had loomed large for me, had seemed even at moments to bristle with difficulties; but that phase of anxiety, I was rejoicingly

to learn, belonged all but to the state of postponed experience or to that of a prolonged and fatalistic indifference. Since to get and to keep finished and dismissed work well behind one, and to have as little to say to it and about it as possible, had been for years one's only law, so, during that flat interregnum, involving, as who should say, the very cultivation of unacquaintedness, creeping superstitions as to what it might really have been had time to grow up and flourish. Not least among these rioted doubtless the fond fear that any tidying-up of the uncanny brood, any removal of accumulated dust, any washing of wizened faces, or straightening of grizzled locks, or twitching, to a better effect, of superannuated garments, might let one in, as the phrase is, for expensive renovations. I make use here of the figure of age and infirmity, but in point of fact I had rather viewed the reappearance of the first-born of my progeny—a reappearance unimaginable save to some inheritance of brighter and more congruous material form, of stored-up braveries of type and margin and ample page, of general dignity and attitude, than had mostly waited on their respective casual cradles—as a descent of awkward infants from the nursery to the drawing-room under the kind appeal of enquiring, of possibly interested, visitors. I had accordingly taken for granted the common decencies of such a case—the responsible glance of some power above from one nursling to another, the rapid flash of an anxious needle, the not imperceptible effect of a certain audible splash of soap-and-water; all in consideration of the searching radiance of drawing-room lamps as compared with nursery candles. But it had been all the while present to me that from the moment a stitch should be taken or a hair-brush applied the *principle* of my making my brood more presentable under the nobler illumination would be accepted and established, and it was there complications might await me. I am afraid I had at stray moments wasted time in wondering what discrimination against the freedom of the needle and the sponge would be able to describe itself as not arbitrary. For it to confess to that taint would be of course to write itself detestable.

"Hands off altogether on the nurse's part!" was, as a merely barbarous injunction, strictly conceivable; but only in the light of the truth that it had never taken effect in any fair and stately, in any not vulgarly irresponsible re-issue of anything. Therefore it was easy to see that any such apologetic suppression as that of the "altogether," any such admission as that of a single dab of the soap, left the door very much ajar. Any request that an indulgent objector to drawing-room discipline, to the purification, in other words, of innocent childhood, should kindly measure out then the appropriate amount of ablutional fluid for the whole case, would, on twenty grounds, indubitably leave that invoked judge gaping. I had none the less, I repeat, at muddled moments, seemed to see myself confusedly invoke him, thanks to my but too naturally not being able to forecast the perfect grace with which an answer to all my questions was meanwhile awaiting me. To expose the case frankly to a test—in other words to begin to re-read—was at once to get nearer all its elements and so, as by the next felicity, feel it purged of every doubt. It was the nervous postponement of that respectful approach that I spoke of just now as, in the connection, my waste of time. This felt awkwardness sprang, as I was at a given moment to perceive, from my too abject acceptance of the grand air with

which the term Revision had somehow, to my imagination, carried itself—and from my frivolous failure to analyze the content of the word. To revise is to see, or to look over, again—which means in the case of a written thing neither more nor less than to re-read it. I had attached to it, in a brooding spirit, the idea of re-writing—with which it was to have in the event, for my *conscious* play of mind, almost nothing in common. I had thought of re-writing as so difficult, and even so absurd, as to be impossible—having also indeed, for that matter, thought of re-reading in the same light. But the felicity under the test was that where I had thus ruefully prefigured two efforts there proved to be but one—and this an effort but at the first blush. What re-writing might be was to remain—it has remained for me to this hour—a mystery. On the other hand the act of revision, the act of seeing it again, caused whatever I looked at on any page to flower before me as into the only terms that honorably expressed it; and the "revised" element in the present Edition is accordingly these terms, these rigid conditions of re-perusal, registered; so many close notes, as who should say, on the particular vision of the matter itself that experience had at last made the only possible one.

Notes

1. Wager. M. McK.
2. The New York edition (Charles Scribner and Co., 1909).

31

Walter Benjamin

The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

Our fine arts were developed, their types and uses were established, in times very different from the present, by men whose power of action upon things was insignificant in comparison with ours. But the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the Beautiful. In all the arts there is a physical component which can no longer be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial. We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art.[1]

Paul Valéry, Pièces sur l'art, "La Conquète de l'ubiquité," Paris

Preface

When Marx undertook his critique of the capitalistic mode of production, this mode was in its infancy. Marx directed his efforts in such a way as to give them prognostic value. He went back to the basic conditions underlying capitalistic production and through his presentation showed what could be expected of capitalism in the future. The result was that one could expect it not only to exploit the proletariat with increasing intensity, but ultimately to create conditions which would make it possible to abolish capitalism itself.

The transformation of the superstructure, which takes place far more slowly than that of the substructure, has taken more than half a century to manifest in all areas of culture the change in the conditions of production. Only today can it be indicated what form this has taken. Certain prognostic requirements should be met by these statements. However, theses about the art of the proletariat after its assumption of power or about the art of a classless society would have less bearing on these demands than theses about the developmental tendencies of art under present conditions of production. Their dialectic is no less noticeable in the superstructure than in the economy. It would therefore be wrong to underestimate the value of such theses as a weapon. They brush aside a number of outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery—concepts whose uncontrolled (and at present

almost uncontrollable) application would lead to a processing of data in the Fascist sense. The concepts which are introduced into the theory of art in what follows differ from the more familiar terms in that they are completely useless for the purposes of Fascism. They are, on the other hand, useful for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art.

I

In principle a work of art has always been reproducible. Man-made artifacts could always be imitated by men. Replicas were made by pupils in practice of their craft, by masters for diffusing their works, and, finally, by third parties in the pursuit of gain. Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents something new. Historically, it advanced intermittently and in leaps at long intervals, but with accelerated intensity. The Greeks knew only two procedures of technically reproducing works of art: founding and stamping. Bronzes, terra cottas, and coins were the only art works which they could produce in quantity. All others were unique and could not be mechanically reproduced. With the woodcut graphic art became mechanically reproducible for the first time, long before script became reproducible by print. The enormous changes which printing, the mechanical reproduction of writing, has brought about in literature are a familiar story. However, within the phenomenon which we are here examining from the perspective of world history, print is merely a special, though particularly important, case. During the Middle Ages engraving and etching were added to the woodcut; at the beginning of the nineteenth century lithography made its appearance.

With lithography the technique of reproduction reached an essentially new stage. This much more direct process was distinguished by the tracing of the design on a stone rather than its incision on a block of wood or its etching on a copperplate and permitted graphic art for the first time to put its products on the market, not only in large numbers as hitherto, but also in daily changing forms. Lithography enabled graphic art to illustrate everyday life, and it began to keep pace with printing. But only a few decades after its invention, lithography was surpassed by photography. For the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction, photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens. Since the eye perceives more swiftly than the hand can draw, the process of pictorial reproduction was accelerated so enormously that it could keep pace with speech. A film operator shooting a scene in the studio captures the images at the speed of an actor's speech. Just as lithography virtually implied the illustrated newspaper, so did photography foreshadow the sound film. The technical reproduction of sound was tackled at the end of the last century. These convergent endeavors made predictable a situation which Paul Valéry pointed up in this sentence: "Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand, hardly more than a sign" (op. cit., p. 226). Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to

cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes. For the study of this standard nothing is more revealing than the nature of the repercussions that these two different manifestations—the reproduction of works of art and the art of the film—have had on art in its traditional form.

II

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence. This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership.[2] The traces of the first can be revealed only by chemical or physical analyses which it is impossible to perform on a reproduction; changes of ownership are subject to a tradition which must be traced from the situation of the original.

The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity. Chemical analyses of the patina of a bronze can help to establish this, as does the proof that a given manuscript of the Middle Ages stems from an archive of the fifteenth century. The whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical—and, of course, not only technical—reproducibility.[3] Confronted with its manual reproduction, which was usually branded as a forgery, the original preserved all its authority; not so vis à vis technical reproduction. The reason is twofold. First, process reproduction is more independent of the original than manual reproduction. For example, in photography, process reproduction can bring out those aspects of the original that are unattainable to the naked eye yet accessible to the lens, which is adjustable and chooses its angle at will. And photographic reproduction, with the aid of certain processes, such as enlargement or slow motion, can capture images which escape natural vision. Secondly, technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room.

The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated. This holds not only for the art work but also, for instance, for a landscape which passes in review before the spectator in a movie. In the case of the art object, a most sensitive nucleus—namely, its authenticity—is interfered with whereas no natural object is vulnerable on that score. The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.[4]

One might subsume the eliminated element in the term "aura" and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind. Both processes are intimately connected with the contemporary mass movements. Their most powerful agent is the film. Its social significance, particularly in its most positive form, is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic aspect, that is, the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage. This phenomenon is most palpable in the great historical films. It extends to ever new positions. In 1927 Abel Gance exclaimed enthusiastically: "Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Beethoven will make films . . . all legends, all mythologies and all myths, all founders of religion, and the very religions . . . await their exposed resurrection, and the heroes crowd each other at the gate."[5] Presumably without intending it, he issued an invitation to a far-reaching liquidation.

III

During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well. The fifth century, with its great shifts of population, saw the birth of the late Roman art industry and the Vienna Genesis, and there developed not only an art different from that of antiquity but also a new kind of perception. The scholars of the Viennese school, Riegl and Wickhoff, who resisted the weight of classical tradition under which these later art forms had been buried, were the first to draw conclusions from them concerning the organization of perception at the time. However far-reaching their insight, these scholars limited themselves to showing the significant, formal hallmark which characterized perception in late Roman times. They did not attempt—and, perhaps, saw no way—to show the social transformations expressed by these changes of perception. The conditions for an analogous insight are more favorable in the present. And if changes in the medium of contemporary perception can be comprehended as decay of the aura, it is possible to show its social causes.

The concept of aura which was proposed above with reference to historical objects may usefully be illustrated with reference to the aura of natural ones. We define the aura of the latter as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be. If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to

the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction.[6] Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction. Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmed eye. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose "sense of the universal equality of things" has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction. Thus is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable in the increasing importance of statistics. The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception.

IV

The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition. This tradition itself is thoroughly alive and extremely changeable. An ancient statue of Venus, for example, stood in a different traditional context with the Greeks, who made it an object of veneration, than with the clerics of the Middle Ages, who viewed it as an ominous idol. Both of them, however, were equally confronted with its uniqueness, that is, its aura. Originally the contextual integration of art in tradition found its expression in the cult. We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual—first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function.[7] In other words, the unique value of the "authentic" work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value. This ritualistic basis, however remote, is still recognizable as secularized ritual even in the most profane forms of the cult of beauty.[8] The secular cult of beauty, developed during the Renaissance and prevailing for three centuries, clearly showed that ritualistic basis in its decline and the first deep crisis which befell it. With the advent of the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography, simultaneously with the rise of socialism, art sensed the approaching crisis which has become evident a century later. At the time, art reacted with the doctrine of *l'art pour l'art,* that is, with a theology of art. This gave rise to what might be called a negative theology in the form of the idea of "pure" art, which not only denied any social function of art but also any categorizing by subject matter. (In poetry, Mallarmé was the first to take this position.)

An analysis of art in the age of mechanical reproduction must do justice to these relationships, for they lead us to an all-important insight: for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility.[9] From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the "authentic" print makes no sense. But the instant the criterion of

authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice—politics.

V

Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out: with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work.[10] Artistic production begins with ceremonial objects destined to serve in a cult. One may assume that what mattered was their existence, not their being on view. The elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow men, but in the main it was meant for the spirits. Today the cult value would seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden. Certain statues of gods are accessible only to the priest in the cella; certain Madonnas remain covered nearly all year round; certain sculptures on medieval cathedrals are invisible to the spectator on ground level. With the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual go increasing opportunities for the exhibition of their products. It is easier to exhibit a portrait bust that can be sent here and there than to exhibit the statue of a divinity that has its fixed place in the interior of a temple. The same holds for the painting as against the mosaic or fresco that preceded it. And even though the public presentability of a mass originally may have been just as great as that of a symphony, the latter originated at the moment when its public presentability promised to surpass that of the mass.

With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature. This is comparable to the situation of the work of art in prehistoric times when, by the absolute emphasis on its cult value, it was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic. Only later did it come to be recognized as a work of art. In the same way today, by the absolute emphasis on its exhibition value the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental.[11] This much is certain: today photography and the film are the most serviceable exemplifications of this new function.

VI

In photography, exhibition value begins to displace cult value all along the line. But cult value does not give way without resistance. It retires into an ultimate retrenchment: the human countenance. It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty. But as man withdraws from the photographic image, the exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to the ritual value. To have pinpointed this new stage constitutes the incomparable significance of Atget,

who, around 1900, took photographs of deserted Paris streets. It has quite justly been said of him that he photographed them like scenes of crime. The scene of a crime, too, is deserted; it is photographed for the purpose of establishing evidence. With Atget, photographs become standard evidence for historical occurrences, and acquire a hidden political significance. They demand a specific kind of approach; free-floating contemplation is not appropriate to them. They stir the viewer; he feels challenged by them in a new way. At the same time picture magazines begin to put up signposts for him, right ones or wrong ones, no matter. For the first time, captions have become obligatory. And it is clear that they have an altogether different character than the title of a painting. The directives which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones.

VII

The nineteenth-century dispute as to the artistic value of painting versus photography today seems devious and confused. This does not diminish its importance, however; if anything, it underlines it. The dispute was in fact the symptom of a historical transformation the universal impact of which was not realized by either of the rivals. When the age of mechanical reproduction separated art from its basis in cult, the semblance of its autonomy disappeared forever. The resulting change in the function of art transcended the perspective of the century; for a long time it even escaped that of the twentieth century, which experienced the development of the film.

Earlier much futile thought had been devoted to the question of whether photography is an art. The primary question—whether the very invention of photography had not transformed the entire nature of art—was not raised. Soon the film theoreticians asked the same ill-considered question with regard to the film. But the difficulties which photography caused traditional aesthetics were mere child's play as compared to those raised by the film. Whence the insensitive and forced character of early theories of the film. Abel Gance, for instance, compares the film with hieroglyphs: "Here, by a remarkable regression, we have come back to the level of expression of the Egyptians. . . . Pictorial language has not yet matured because our eyes have not yet adjusted to it. There is as yet insufficient respect for, insufficient cult of, what it expresses."[12] Or, in the words of Séverin-Mars: "What art has been granted a dream more poetical and more real at the same time! Approached in this fashion the film might represent an incomparable means of expression. Only the most high-minded persons, in the most perfect and mysterious moments of their lives, should be allowed to enter its ambience."[13] Alexandre Arnoux concludes his fantasy about the silent film with the question: "Do not all the bold descriptions we have given amount to the definition of prayer?"[14] It is instructive to note how their desire to class the film among the "arts" forces these theoreticians to read ritual elements into it—with a striking lack of discretion. Yet when these speculations were published, films like *L'Opinion publique* and *The Gold Rush* had already appeared. This, however, did not keep Abel Gance

from adducing hieroglyphs for purposes of comparison, nor Séverin-Mars from speaking of the film as one might speak of paintings by Fra Angelico. Characteristically, even today ultrareactionary authors give the film a similar contextual significance—if not an outright sacred one, then at least a supernatural one. Commenting on Max Reinhardt's film version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Werfel states that undoubtedly it was the sterile copying of the exterior world with its streets, interiors, railroad stations, restaurants, motorcars, and beaches which until now had obstructed the elevation of the film to the realm of art. "The film has not yet realized its true meaning, its real possibilities . . . these consist in its unique faculty to express by natural means and with incomparable persuasiveness all that is fairylike, marvelous, supernatural."[15]

VIII

The artistic performance of a stage actor is definitely presented to the public by the actor in person; that of the screen actor, however, is presented by a camera, with a twofold consequence. The camera that presents the performance of the film actor to the public need not respect the performance as an integral whole. Guided by the cameraman, the camera continually changes its position with respect to the performance. The sequence of positional views which the editor composes from the material supplied him constitutes the completed film. It comprises certain factors of movement which are in reality those of the camera, not to mention special camera angles, close-ups, etc. Hence, the performance of the actor is subjected to a series of optical tests. This is the first consequence of the fact that the actor's performance is presented by means of a camera. Also, the film actor lacks the opportunity of the stage actor to adjust to the audience during his performance, since he does not present his performance to the audience in person. This permits the audience to take the position of a critic, without experiencing any personal contact with the actor. The audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera. Consequently the audience takes the position of the camera; its approach is that of testing.[16] This is not the approach to which cult values may be exposed.

IX

For the film, what matters primarily is that the actor represents himself to the public before the camera, rather than representing someone else. One of the first to sense the actor's metamorphosis by this form of testing was Pirandello. Though his remarks on the subject in his novel *Si Gira* were limited to the negative aspects of the question and to the silent film only, this hardly impairs their validity. For in this respect, the sound film did not change anything essential. What matters is that the part is acted not for an audience but for a mechanical contrivance—in the case of the sound film, for two of them. "The film actor," wrote Pirandello, "feels as if in exile—exiled not only from the stage but also from himself. With a vague sense of discomfort he feels inexplicable emptiness: his body loses its corporeality, it evaporates, it is deprived of reality, life, voice, and the noises caused by his moving about, in order to be

changed into a mute image, flickering an instant on the screen, then vanishing into silence. . . . The projector will play with his shadow before the public, and he himself must be content to play before the camera."[17] This situation might also be characterized as follows: for the first time—and this is the effect of the film—man has to operate with his whole living person, yet forgoing its aura. For aura is tied to his presence; there can be no replica of it. The aura which, on the stage, emanates from Macbeth, cannot be separated for the spectators from that of the actor. However, the singularity of the shot in the studio is that the camera is substituted for the public. Consequently, the aura that envelops the actor vanishes, and with it the aura of the figure he portrays.

It is not surprising that it should be a dramatist such as Pirandello who, in characterizing the film, inadvertently touches on the very crisis in which we see the theater. Any thorough study proves that there is indeed no greater contrast than that of the stage play to a work of art that is completely subject to or, like the film, founded in, mechanical reproduction. Experts have long recognized that in the film "the greatest effects are almost always obtained by 'acting' as little as possible. . . ." In 1932 Rudolf Arnheim saw "the latest trend . . . in treating the actor as a stage prop chosen for its characteristics and . . . inserted at the proper place."[18] With this idea something else is closely connected. The stage actor identifies himself with the character of his role. The film actor very often is denied this opportunity. His creation is by no means all of a piece; it is composed of many separate performances. Besides certain fortuitous considerations, such as cost of studio, availability of fellow players, décor, etc., there are elementary necessities of equipment that split the actor's work into a series of mountable episodes. In particular, lighting and its installation require the presentation of an event that, on the screen, unfolds as a rapid and unified scene, in a sequence of separate shootings which may take hours at the studio; not to mention more obvious montage. Thus a jump from the window can be shot in the studio as a jump from a scaffold, and the ensuing flight, if need be, can be shot weeks later when outdoor scenes are taken. Far more paradoxical cases can easily be construed. Let us assume that an actor is supposed to be startled by a knock at the door. If his reaction is not satisfactory, the director can resort to an expedient: when the actor happens to be at the studio again he has a shot fired behind him without his being forewarned of it. The frightened reaction can be shot now and be cut into the screen version. Nothing more strikingly shows that art has left the realm of the "beautiful semblance" which, so far, had been taken to be the only sphere where art could thrive.

X

The feeling of strangeness that overcomes the actor before the camera, as Pirandello describes it, is basically of the same kind as the estrangement felt before one's own image in the mirror. But now the reflected image has become separable, transportable. And where is it transported? Before the public.[19] Never for a moment does the screen actor cease to be conscious of this fact. While facing the camera he knows that ultimately he will face the public, the con-

sumers who constitute the market. This market, where he offers not only his labor but also his whole self, his heart and soul, is beyond his reach. During the shooting he has as little contact with it as any article made in a factory. This may contribute to that oppression, that new anxiety which, according to Pirandello, grips the actor before the camera. The film responds to the shriveling of the aura with an artificial build-up of the "personality" outside the studio. The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the "spell of the personality," the phony spell of a commodity. So long as the movie-makers' capital sets the fashion, as a rule no other revolutionary merit can be accredited to today's film than the promotion of a revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art. We do not deny that in some cases today's films can also promote revolutionary criticism of social conditions, even of the distribution of property. However, our present study is no more specifically concerned with this than is the film production of Western Europe.

It is inherent in the technique of the film as well as that of sports that everybody who witnesses its accomplishments is somewhat of an expert. This is obvious to anyone listening to a group of newspaper boys leaning on their bicycles and discussing the outcome of a bicycle race. It is not for nothing that newspaper publishers arrange races for their delivery boys. These arouse great interest among the participants, for the victor has an opportunity to rise from delivery boy to professional racer. Similarly, the newsreel offers everyone the opportunity to rise from passer-by to movie extra. In this way any man might even find himself part of a work of art, as witness Vertoff's *Three Songs about Lenin* or Ivens' *Borinage.* Any man today can lay claim to being filmed. This claim can best be elucidated by a comparative look at the historical situation of contemporary literature.

For centuries a small number of writers were confronted by many thousands of readers. This changed toward the end of the last century. With the increasing extension of the press, which kept placing new political, religious, scientific, professional, and local organs before the readers, an increasing number of readers became writers—at first, occasional ones. It began with the daily press opening to its readers space for "letters to the editor." And today there is hardly a gainfully employed European who could not, in principle, find an opportunity to publish somewhere or other comments on his work, grievances, documentary reports, or that sort of thing. Thus, the distinction between author and public is about to lose its basic character. The difference becomes merely functional; it may vary from case to case. At any moment the reader is ready to turn into a writer. As expert, which he had to become willy-nilly in an extremely specialized work process, even if only in some minor respect, the reader gains access to authorship. In the Soviet Union work itself is given a voice. To present it verbally is part of a man's ability to perform the work. Literary license is now founded on polytechnic rather than specialized training and thus becomes common property.[20]

All this can easily be applied to the film, where transitions that in literature took centuries have come about in a decade. In cinematic practice, partic-

ularly in Russia, this change-over has partially become established reality. Some of the players whom we meet in Russian films are not actors in our sense but people who portray *themselves*—and primarily in their own work process. In Western Europe the capitalistic exploitation of the film denies consideration to modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced. Under these circumstances the film industry is trying hard to spur the interest of the masses through illusion-promoting spectacles and dubious speculations.

XI

The shooting of a film, especially of a sound film, affords a spectacle unimaginable anywhere at any time before this. It presents a process in which it is impossible to assign to a spectator a viewpoint which would exclude from the actual scene such extraneous accessories as camera equipment, lighting machinery, staff assistants, etc.—unless his eye were on a line parallel with the lens. This circumstance, more than any other, renders superficial and insignificant any possible similarity between a scene in the studio and one on the stage. In the theater one is well aware of the place from which the play cannot immediately be detected as illusionary. There is no such place for the movie scene that is being shot. Its illusionary nature is that of the second degree, the result of cutting. That is to say, in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of equipment is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology.

Even more revealing is the comparison of these circumstances, which differ so much from those of the theater, with the situation in painting. Here the question is: How does the cameraman compare with the painter? To answer this we take recourse to an analogy with a surgical operation. The surgeon represents the polar opposite of the magician. The magician heals a sick person by the laying on of hands; the surgeon cuts into the patient's body. The magician maintains the natural distance between the patient and himself; though he reduces it very slightly by the laying on of hands, he greatly increases it by virtue of his authority. The surgeon does exactly the reverse; he greatly diminishes the distance between himself and the patient by penetrating into the patient's body, and increases it but little by the caution with which his hand moves among the organs. In short, in contrast to the magician—who is still hidden in the medical practitioner—the surgeon at the decisive moment abstains from facing the patient man to man; rather, it is through the operation that he penetrates into him.

Magician and surgeon compare to painter and cameraman. The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web.[21] There is a tremendous difference between the pictures they obtain. That of the painter is a total one, that of the cameraman consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law. Thus,

for contemporary man the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant than that of the painter, since it offers, precisely because of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment, an aspect of reality which is free of all equipment. And that is what one is entitled to ask from a work of art.

XII

Mechanical reproduction of art changes the reaction of the masses toward art. The reactionary attitude toward a Picasso painting changes into the progressive reaction toward a Chaplin movie. The progressive reaction is characterized by the direct, intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert. Such fusion is of great social significance. The greater the decrease in the social significance of an art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by the public. The conventional is uncritically enjoyed, and the truly new is criticized with aversion. With regard to the screen, the critical and the receptive attitudes of the public coincide. The decisive reason for this is that individual reactions are predetermined by the mass audience response they are about to produce, and this is nowhere more pronounced than in the film. The moment these responses become manifest they control each other. Again, the comparison with painting is fruitful. A painting has always had an excellent chance to be viewed by one person or by a few. The simultaneous contemplation of paintings by a large public, such as developed in the nineteenth century, is an early symptom of the crisis of painting, a crisis which was by no means occasioned exclusively by photography but rather in a relatively independent manner by the appeal of art works to the masses.

Painting simply is in no position to present an object for simultaneous collective experience, as it was possible for architecture at all times, for the epic poem in the past, and for the movie today. Although this circumstance in itself should not lead one to conclusions about the social role of painting, it does constitute a serious threat as soon as painting, under special conditions and, as it were, against its nature, is confronted directly by the masses. In the churches and monasteries of the Middle Ages and at the princely courts up to the end of the eighteenth century, a collective reception of paintings did not occur simultaneously, but by graduated and hierarchized mediation. The change that has come about is an expression of the particular conflict in which painting was implicated by the mechanical reproducibility of paintings. Although paintings began to be publicly exhibited in galleries and salons, there was no way for the masses to organize and control themselves in their reception.[22] Thus the same public which responds in a progressive manner toward a grotesque film is bound to respond in a reactionary manner to surrealism.

XIII

The characteristics of the film lie not only in the manner in which man presents himself to mechanical equipment but also in the manner in which, by means of this apparatus, man can represent his environment. A glance at occupational psychology illustrates the testing capacity of the equipment. Psychoanalysis illustrates it in a different perspective. The film has enriched our field

of perception with methods which can be illustrated by those of Freudian theory. Fifty years ago, a slip of the tongue passed more or less unnoticed. Only exceptionally may such a slip have revealed dimensions of depth in a conversation which had seemed to be taking its course on the surface. Since the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* things have changed. This book isolated and made analyzable things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception. For the entire spectrum of optical, and now also acoustical, perception the film has brought about a similar deepening of apperception. It is only an obverse of this fact that behavior items shown in a movie can be analyzed much more precisely and from more points of view than those presented on paintings or on the stage. As compared with painting, filmed behavior lends itself more readily to analysis because of its incomparably more precise statements of the situation. In comparison with the stage scene, the filmed behavior item lends itself more readily to analysis because it can be isolated more easily. This circumstance derives its chief importance from its tendency to promote the mutual penetration of art and science. Actually, of a screened behavior item which is neatly brought out in a certain situation, like a muscle of a body, it is difficult to say which is more fascinating, its artistic value or its value for science. To demonstrate the identity of the artistic and scientific uses of photography which heretofore usually were separated will be one of the revolutionary functions of the film.[23]

By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action. Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling. With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: it reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject. So, too, slow motion not only presents familiar qualities of movement but reveals in them entirely unknown ones "which, far from looking like retarded rapid movements, give the effect of singularly gliding, floating, supernatural motions."[24] Evidently a different nature opens itself to the camera than opens to the naked eye—if only because an unconsciously penetrated space is substituted for a space consciously explored by man. Even if one has a general knowledge of the way people walk, one knows nothing of a person's posture during the fractional second of a stride. The act of reaching for a lighter or a spoon is familiar routine, yet we hardly know what really goes on between hand and metal, not to mention how this fluctuates with our moods. Here the camera intervenes with the resources of its lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions. The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses.

XIV

One of the foremost tasks of art has always been the creation of a demand which could be fully satisfied only later.[25] The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form. The extravagances and crudities of art which thus appear, particularly in the so-called decadent epochs, actually arise from the nucleus of its richest historical energies. In recent years, such barbarisms were abundant in Dadaism. It is only now that its impulse becomes discernible: Dadaism attempted to create by pictorial—and literary—means the effects which the public today seeks in the film.

Every fundamentally new, pioneering creation of demands will carry beyond its goal. Dadaism did so to the extent that it sacrificed the market values which are so characteristic of the film in favor of higher ambitions—though of course it was not conscious of such intentions as here described. The Dadaists attached much less importance to the sales value of their work than to its uselessness for contemplative immersion. The studied degradation of their material was not the least of their means to achieve this uselessness. Their poems are "word salad" containing obscenities and every imaginable waste product of language. The same is true of their paintings, on which they mounted buttons and tickets. What they intended and achieved was a relentless destruction of the aura of their creations, which they branded as reproductions with the very means of production. Before a painting of Arp's or a poem by August Stramm it is impossible to take time for contemplation and evaluation as one would before a canvas of Derain's or a poem by Rilke. In the decline of middle-class society, contemplation became a school for asocial behavior; it was countered by distraction as a variant of social conduct.[26] Dadaistic activities actually assured a rather vehement distraction by making works of art the center of scandal. One requirement was foremost: to outrage the public.

From an alluring appearance or persuasive structure of sound the work of art of the Dadaists became an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality. It promoted a demand for the film, the distracting element of which is also primarily tactile, being based on changes of place and focus which periodically assail the spectator. Let us compare the screen on which a film unfolds with the canvas of a painting. The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested. Duhamel, who detests the film and knows nothing of its significance, though something of its structure, notes this circumstance as follows: "I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images."[27] The spectator's process of association in view of these images is indeed interrupted by their constant, sudden change. This constitutes the shock effect of the film, which, like all shocks, should be cushioned by heightened presence of mind.[28] By means of its technical structure,

the film has taken the physical shock effect out of the wrappers in which Dadaism had, as it were, kept it inside the moral shock effect.[29]

XV

The mass is a matrix from which all traditional behavior toward works of art issues today in a new form. Quantity has been transmuted into quality. The greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation. The fact that the new mode of participation first appeared in a disreputable form must not confuse the spectator. Yet some people have launched spirited attacks against precisely this superficial aspect. Among these, Duhamel has expressed himself in the most radical manner. What he objects to most is the kind of participation which the movie elicits from the masses. Duhamel calls the movie "a pastime for helots, a diversion for uneducated, wretched, worn-out creatures who are consumed by their worries . . . , a spectacle which requires no concentration and presupposes no intelligence . . . , which kindles no light in the heart and awakens no hope other than the ridiculous one of someday becoming a 'star' in Los Angeles."[30] Clearly, this is at bottom the same ancient lament that the masses seek distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator. That is a commonplace. The question remains whether it provides a platform for the analysis of the film. A closer look is needed here. Distraction and concentration form polar opposites which may be stated as follows: A man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. He enters into this work of art the way legend tells of the Chinese painter when he viewed his finished painting. In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art. This is most obvious with regard to buildings. Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction. The laws of its reception are most instructive.

Buildings have been man's companions since primeval times. Many art forms have developed and perished. Tragedy begins with the Greeks, is extinguished with them, and after centuries its "rules" only are revived. The epic poem, which had its origin in the youth of nations, expires in Europe at the end of the Renaissance. Panel painting is a creation of the Middle Ages, and nothing guarantees its uninterrupted existence. But the human need for shelter is lasting. Architecture has never been idle. Its history is more ancient than that of any other art, and its claim to being a living force has significance in every attempt to comprehend the relationship of the masses to art. Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception—or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building. On the tactile side there is no counterpart to contemplation on the optical side. Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception. The latter, too, occurs much less through rapt attention than by noticing the object in incidental fashion. This mode of appropriation, developed with reference to architecture, in certain circumstances acquires canonical value. For the tasks

which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation, alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation.

The distracted person, too, can form habits. More, the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit. Distraction as provided by art presents a covert control of the extent to which new tasks have become soluble by apperception. Since, moreover, individuals are tempted to avoid such tasks, art will tackle the most difficult and most important ones where it is able to mobilize the masses. Today it does so in the film. Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound changes in apperception, finds in the film its true means of exercise. The film with its shock effect meets this mode of reception halfway. The film makes the cult value recede into the background not only by putting the public in the position of the critic, but also by the fact that at the movies this position requires no attention. The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one.

Epilogue

The growing proletarianization of modern man and the increasing formation of masses are two aspects of the same process. Fascism attempts to organize the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves.[31] The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses, whom Fascism, with its *Führer* cult, forces to their knees, has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values.

All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war. War and war only can set a goal for mass movements on the largest scale while respecting the traditional property system. This is the political formula for the situation. The technological formula may be stated as follows: Only war makes it possible to mobilize all of today's technical resources while maintaining the property system. It goes without saying that the Fascist apotheosis of war does not employ such arguments. Still, Marinetti says in his manifesto on the Ethiopian colonial war: "For twenty-seven years we Futurists have rebelled against the branding of war as antiaesthetic. . . . Accordingly we state: . . . War is beautiful because it establishes man's dominion over the subjugated machinery by means of gas masks, terrifying megaphones, flame throwers, and small tanks. War is beautiful because it initiates the dreamt-of metalization of the human body. War is beautiful because it enriches a flowering meadow with the fiery orchids of machine guns. War is beautiful because it combines the gunfire, the cannonades, the cease-fire, the scents, and the stench of putrefaction into a symphony. War is beautiful because it creates new architecture, like that of the big tanks, the geometrical formation flights, the smoke spirals from burning villages, and many others. . . . Poets and artists of Futurism! . . . re-

member these principles of an aesthetics of war so that your struggle for a new literature and a new graphic art . . . may be illumined by them!"

This manifesto has the virtue of clarity. Its formulations deserve to be accepted by dialecticians. To the latter, the aesthetics of today's war appears as follows: If the natural utilization of productive forces is impeded by the property system, the increase in technical devices, in speed, and in the sources of energy will press for unnatural utilization, and this is found in war. The destructiveness of war furnishes proof that society has not been mature enough to incorporate technology as its organ, that technology has not been sufficiently developed to cope with the elemental forces of society. The horrible features of imperialistic warfare are attributable to the discrepancy between the tremendous means of production and their inadequate utilization in the process of production—in other words, to unemployment and the lack of markets. Imperialistic war is a rebellion of technology which collects, in the form of "human material," the claims to which society has denied its natural material. Instead of draining rivers, society directs a human stream into a bed of trenches; instead of dropping seeds from airplanes, it drops incendiary bombs over cities; and through gas warfare the aura is abolished in a new way.

"*Fiat ars—pereat mundus,*" says Fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the consummation of "*l'art pour l'art.*" Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.

Notes

1. Quoted from Paul Valéry, *Aesthetics,* "The Conquest of Ubiquity," trans. Ralph Manheim, p. 225. Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series, New York, 1964.

2. Of course, the history of a work of art encompasses more than this. The history of the "Mona Lisa," for instance, encompasses the kind and number of its copies made in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.

3. Precisely because authenticity is not reproducible, the intensive penetration of certain (mechanical) processes of reproduction was instrumental in differentiating and grading authenticity. To develop such differentiations was an important function of the trade in works of art. The invention of the woodcut may be said to have struck at the root of the quality of authenticity even before its late flowering. To be sure, at the time of its origin a medieval picture of the Madonna could not yet be said to be "authentic." It became "authentic" only during the succeeding centuries and perhaps most strikingly so during the last one.

4. The poorest provincial staging of *Faust* is superior to a Faust film in that, ideally, it competes with the first performance at Weimar. Before the screen it is unprofitable to remember traditional contents which might come to mind before the stage—for instance, that Goethe's friend Johann Heinrich Merck is hidden in Mephisto, and the like.

5. Abel Gance, "Le Temps de l'image est venu," *L'Art cinématographique,* vol. 2, pp. 94f., Paris, 1927.

6. To satisfy the human interest of the masses may mean to have one's social function removed from the field of vision. Nothing guarantees that a portraitist of today, when painting a famous surgeon at the breakfast table in the midst of his family, depicts his social function more precisely than a painter of the 17th century who portrayed his medical doctors as representing this profession, like Rembrandt in his "Anatomy Lesson."

7. The definition of the aura as a "unique phenomenon of a distance however close it may be" represents nothing but the formulation of the cult value of the work of art in categories of space and time perception. Distance is the opposite of closeness. The essentially distant object is the unapproachable one. Unapproachability is indeed a major quality of the cult image. True to its nature it remains "distant, however close it may be." The closeness which one may gain from its subject matter does not impair the distance which it retains in its appearance.

8. To the extent to which the cult value of the painting is secularized the ideas of its fundamental uniqueness lose distinctness. In the imagination of the beholder the uniqueness of the phenomena which hold sway in the cult image is more and more displaced by the empirical uniqueness of the creator or of his creative achievement. To be sure, never completely so; the concept of authenticity always transcends mere genuineness. (This is particularly apparent in the collector who always retains some traces of the fetishist and who, by owning the work of art, shares in its ritual power.) Nevertheless, the function of the concept of authenticity remains determinate in the evaluation of art; with the secularization of art, authenticity displaces the cult value of the work.

9. In the case of films, mechanical reproduction is not, as with literature and painting, an external condition for mass distribution. Mechanical reproduction is inherent in the very technique of film production. This technique not only permits in the most direct way but virtually causes mass distribution. It enforces distribution because the production of a film is so expensive that an individual who, for instance, might afford to buy a painting no longer can afford to buy a film. In 1927 it was calculated that a major film, in order to pay its way, had to reach an audience of nine million. With the sound film, to be sure, a setback in its international distribution occurred at first: audiences became limited by language barriers. This coincided with the Fascist emphasis on national interests. It is more important to focus on this connection with Fascism than on this setback, which was soon minimized by synchronization. The simultaneity of both phenomena is attributable to the depression. The same disturbances which, on a larger scale, led to an attempt to maintain the existing property structure by sheer force led the endangered film capital to speed up the development of the sound film. The introduction of the sound film brought about a temporary relief, not only because it again brought the masses into the theaters but also because it merged new capital from the electrical industry with that of the film industry. Thus, viewed from the outside, the sound film promoted national interests, but seen from the inside it helped to internationalize film production even more than previously.

10. This polarity cannot come into its own in the aesthetics of Idealism. Its idea of beauty comprises these polar opposites without differentiating between them and consequently excludes their polarity. Yet in Hegel this polarity announces itself as clearly as possible within the limits of Idealism. We quote from his *Philosophy of History:* "Images were known of old. Piety at an early time required them for worship, but it could do without *beautiful* images. These might even be disturbing. In every beautiful painting there is also something nonspiritual, merely external, but its spirit speaks to man through its beauty. Worshipping, conversely, is concerned with the work as an

object, for it is but a spiritless stupor of the soul. . . . Fine art has arisen . . . in the church . . . , although it has already gone beyond its principle as art." Likewise, the following passage from *The Philosophy of Fine Art* indicates that Hegel sensed a problem here. "We are beyond the stage of reverence for works of art as divine and objects deserving our worship. The impression they produce is one of a more reflective kind, and the emotions they arouse require a higher test. . . ."—G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art,* trans., with notes, by F. P. B. Osmaston, vol. 1, p. 12, London, 1920.

The transition from the first kind of artistic reception to the second characterizes the history of artistic reception in general. Apart from that, a certain oscillation between these two polar modes of reception can be demonstrated for each work of art. Take the Sistine Madonna. Since Hubert Grimme's research it has been known that the Madonna originally was painted for the purpose of exhibition. Grimme's research was inspired by the question: What is the purpose of the molding in the foreground of the painting which the two cupids lean upon? How, Grimme asked further, did Raphael come to furnish the sky with two draperies? Research proved that the Madonna had been commissioned for the public lying-in-state of Pope Sixtus. The Popes lay in state in a certain side chapel of St. Peter's. On that occasion Raphael's picture had been fastened in a nichelike background of the chapel, supported by the coffin. In this picture Raphael portrays the Madonna approaching the papal coffin in clouds from the background of the niche, which was demarcated by green drapes. At the obsequies of Sixtus a pre-eminent exhibition value of Raphael's picture was taken advantage of. Some time later it was placed on the high altar in the church of the Black Friars at Piacenza. The reason for this exile is to be found in the Roman rites which forbid the use of paintings exhibited at obsequies as cult objects on the high altar. This regulation devalued Raphael's picture to some degree. In order to obtain an adequate price nevertheless, the Papal See resolved to add to the bargain the tacit toleration of the picture above the high altar. To avoid attention the picture was given to the monks of the far-off provincial town.

11. Bertolt Brecht, on a different level, engaged in analogous reflections: "If the concept of 'work of art' can no longer be applied to the thing that emerges once the work is transformed into a commodity, we have to eliminate this concept with cautious care but without fear, lest we liquidate the function of the very thing as well. For it has to go through this phase without mental reservation, and not as noncommittal deviation from the straight path; rather, what happens here with the work of art will change it fundamentally and erase its past to such an extent that should the old concept be taken up again—and it will, why not?—it will no longer stir any memory of the thing it once designated."

12. Abel Gance, op. cit., pp. 100–1.

13. Séverin-Mars, quoted by Abel Gance, op. cit., p. 100.

14. Alexandre Arnoux, *Cinéma pris,* 1929, p. 28.

15. Franz Werfel, "Ein Sommernachtstraum, Ein Film von Shakespeare und Reinhardt," *Neues Wiener Journal,* cited in *Lu* 15, Nov. 1935.

16. "The film . . . provides—or could provide—useful insight into the details of human actions. . . . Character is never used as a source of motivation; the inner life of the persons never supplies the principal cause of the plot and seldom is its main result." (Bertolt Brecht, *Versuche,* "Der Dreigroschenprozess," p. 268.) The expansion of the field of the testable which mechanical equipment brings about for the actor corresponds to the extraordinary expansion of the field of the testable brought about for the individual through economic conditions. Thus, vocational aptitude tests become constantly more important. What matters in these tests are segmental performances of the individual. The film shot and the vocational aptitude test are taken before a committee of

experts. The camera director in the studio occupies a place identical with that of the examiner during aptitude tests.

17. Luigi Pirandello, *Si Gira,* quoted by Léon Pierre-Quint, “Signification du cinéma,” *L'Art cinématographique,* vol. 2 (Paris, 1927), pp. 14–15.

18. Rudolf Arnheim, *Film als Kunst,* Berlin, 1932, pp. 176f. In this context certain seemingly unimportant details in which the film director deviates from stage practices gain in interest. Such is the attempt to let the actor play without make-up, as made among others by Dreyer in his *Jeanne d'Arc.* Dreyer spent months seeking the forty actors who constitute the Inquisitors' tribunal. The search for these actors resembled that for stage properties that are hard to come by. Dreyer made every effort to avoid resemblances of age, build, and physiognomy. If the actor thus becomes a stage property, this latter, on the other hand, frequently functions as actor. At least it is not unusual for the film to assign a role to the stage property. Instead of choosing at random from a great wealth of examples, let us concentrate on a particularly convincing one. A clock that is working will always be a disturbance on the stage. There it cannot be permitted its function of measuring time. Even in a naturalistic play, astronomical time would clash with theatrical time. Under these circumstances it is highly revealing that the film can, whenever appropriate, use time as measured by a clock. From this more than from many other touches it may clearly be recognized that under certain circumstances each and every prop in a film may assume important functions. From here it is but one step to Pudovkin's statement that “the playing of an actor which is connected with an object and is built around it . . . is always one of the strongest methods of cinematic construction.” (W. Pudovkin, *Filmregie und Filmmanuskript,* Berlin, 1928, p. 126.) The film is the first art form capable of demonstrating how matter plays tricks on man. Hence, films can be an excellent means of materialistic representation.

19. The change noted here in the method of exhibition caused by mechanical reproduction applies to politics as well. The present crisis of the bourgeois democracies comprises a crisis of the conditions which determine the public presentation of the rulers. Democracies exhibit a member of government directly and personally before the nation's representatives. Parliament is his public. Since the innovations of camera and recording equipment make it possible for the orator to become audible and visible to an unlimited number of persons, the presentation of the man of politics before camera and recording equipment becomes paramount. Parliaments, as much as theaters, are deserted. Radio and film not only affect the function of the professional actor but likewise the function of those who also exhibit themselves before this mechanical equipment, those who govern. Though their tasks may be different, the change affects equally the actor and the ruler. The trend is toward establishing controllable and transferrable skills under certain social conditions. This results in a new selection, a selection before the equipment from which the star and the dictator emerge victorious.

20. The privileged character of the respective techniques is lost. Aldous Huxley writes:

> Advances in technology have led . . . to vulgarity. . . . Process reproduction and the rotary press have made possible the indefinite multiplication of writing and pictures. Universal education and relatively high wages have created an enormous public who know how to read and can afford to buy reading and pictorial matter. A great industry has been called into existence in order to supply these commodities. Now, artistic talent is a very rare phenomenon; whence it follows . . . that, at every epoch and in all countries, most art has been bad. But the proportion of trash in the total artistic output is greater now than at any other period. That it must be so is a matter of simple arithmetic. The population of Western Europe

> has a little more than doubled during the last century. But the amount of reading—and seeing—matter has increased, I should imagine, at least twenty and possibly fifty or even a hundred times. If there were n men of talent in a population of x millions, there will presumably be 2n men of talent among 2x millions. The situation may be summed up thus. For every page of print and pictures published a century ago, twenty or perhaps even a hundred pages are published today. But for every man of talent then living, there are now only two men of talent. It may be of course that, thanks to universal education, many potential talents which in the past would have been stillborn are now enabled to realize themselves. Let us assume, then, that there are now three or even four men of talent to every one of earlier times. It still remains true to say that the consumption of reading—and seeing—matter has far outstripped the natural production of gifted writers and draughtsmen. It is the same with hearing-matter. Prosperity, the gramophone and the radio have created an audience of hearers who consume an amount of hearing-matter that has increased out of all proportion to the increase of population and the consequent natural increase of talented musicians. It follows from all this that in all the arts the output of trash is both absolutely and relatively greater than it was in the past; and that it must remain greater for just so long as the world continues to consume the present inordinate quantities of reading-matter seeing-matter, and hearing-matter.

Aldous Huxley, *Beyond the Mexique Bay. A Traveller's Journal* (London, 1949), pp. 274ff. First published in 1934. This mode of observation is obviously not progressive.

21. The boldness of the cameraman is indeed comparable to that of the surgeon. Luc Durtain lists among specific technical sleights of hand those "which are required in surgery in the case of certain difficult operations. I choose as an example a case from oto-rhino-laryngology; . . . the so-called endonasal perspective procedure; or I refer to the acrobatic tricks of larynx surgery which have to be performed following the reversed picture in the laryngoscope. I might also speak of ear surgery which suggests the precision work of watchmakers. What range of the most subtle muscular acrobatics is required from the man who wants to repair or save the human body! We have only to think of the couching of a cataract where there is virtually a debate of steel with nearly fluid tissue, or of the major abdominal operations (laparotomy)." Luc Durtain.

22. This mode of observation may seem crude, but as the great theoretician Leonardo has shown, crude modes of observation may at times be usefully adduced. Leonardo compares painting and music as follows: "Painting is superior to music because, unlike unfortunate music, it does not have to die as soon as it is born. . . . Music which is consumed in the very act of its birth is inferior to painting which the use of varnish has rendered eternal" (Trattato I, 29).

23. Renaissance painting offers a revealing analogy to this situation. The incomparable development of this art and its significance rested not least on the integration of a number of new sciences, or at least of new scientific data. Renaissance painting made use of anatomy and perspective, of mathematics, meteorology, and chromatology. Valéry writes: "What could be further from us than the strange claim of a Leonardo to whom painting was a supreme goal and the ultimate demonstration of knowledge? Leonardo was convinced that painting demanded universal knowledge, and he did not even shrink from a theoretical analysis which to us is stunning because of its very depth and precision." Paul Valéry, *Pièces sur l'art,* "Autour de Corot," Paris, p. 191.

24. Arnheim, loc. cit., p. 138.

25. "The work of art," says André Breton, "is valuable only in so far as it is vibrated by the reflexes of the future." Indeed, every developed art form intersects three lines of

development. Technology works toward a certain form of art. Before the advent of the film there were photo booklets with pictures which flitted by the onlooker upon pressure of the thumb, thus portraying a boxing bout or a tennis match. Then there were the slot machines in bazaars; their picture sequences were produced by the turning of a crank.

Secondly, the traditional art forms in certain phases of their development strenuously work toward effects which later are effortlessly attained by the new ones. Before the rise of the movie the Dadaists' performances tried to create an audience reaction which Chaplin later evoked in a more natural way.

Thirdly, unspectacular social changes often promote a change in receptivity which will benefit the new art form. Before the movie had begun to create its public, pictures that were no longer immobile captivated an assembled audience in the so-called *Kaiserpanorama.* Here the public assembled before a screen into which stereoscopes were mounted, one to each beholder. By a mechanical process individual pictures appeared briefly before the stereoscopes, then made way for others. Edison still had to use similar devices in presenting the first movie strip before the film screen and projection were known. This strip was presented to a small public which stared into the apparatus in which the succession of pictures was reeling off. Incidentally, the institution of the *Kaiserpanorama* shows very clearly a dialectic of the development. Shortly before the movie turned the reception of pictures into a collective one, the individual viewing of pictures in these swiftly outmoded establishments came into play once more with an intensity comparable to that of the ancient priest beholding the statue of a divinity in the cella.

26. The theological archetype of this contemplation is the awareness of being alone with one's God. Such awareness, in the heyday of the bourgeoisie, went to strengthen the freedom to shake off clerical tutelage. During the decline of the bourgeoisie this awareness had to take into account the hidden tendency to withdraw from public affairs those forces which the individual draws upon in his communion with God.

27. Georges Duhamel, *Scènes de la vie future,* Paris, 1930, p. 52.

28. The film is the art form that is in keeping with the increased threat to his life which modern man has to face. Man's need to expose himself to shock effects is his adjustment to the dangers threatening him. The film corresponds to profound changes in the apperceptive apparatus—changes that are experienced on an individual scale by the man in the street in big-city traffic, on a historical scale by every present-day citizen.

29. As for Dadaism, insights important for Cubism and Futurism are to be gained from the movie. Both appear as deficient attempts of art to accommodate the pervasion of reality by the apparatus. In contrast to the film, these schools did not try to use the apparatus as such for the artistic presentation of reality, but aimed at some sort of alloy in the joint presentation of reality and apparatus. In Cubism, the premonition that this apparatus will be structurally based on optics plays a dominant part; in Futurism, it is the premonition of the effects of this apparatus which are brought out by the rapid sequence of the film strip.

30. Duhamel, op. cit., p. 58.

31. One technical feature is significant here, especially with regard to newsreels, the propagandist importance of which can hardly be overestimated. Mass reproduction is aided especially by the reproduction of masses. In big parades and monster rallies, in sports events, and in war, all of which nowadays are captured by camera and sound recording, the masses are brought face to face with themselves. This process, whose significance need not be stressed, is intimately connected with the development of the techniques of reproduction and photography. Mass movements are usually discerned

more clearly by a camera than by the naked eye. A bird's-eye view best captures gatherings of hundreds of thousands. And even though such a view may be as accessible to the human eye as it is to the camera, the image received by the eye cannot be enlarged the way a negative is enlarged. This means that mass movements, including war, constitute a form of human behavior which particularly favors mechanical equipment.

32

Keith Cohen

From Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange

The twentieth century began in a flurry of artistic hybrids, everything from calligrams to tone poems. The mood in this period of *contre-décadence* was to change significantly after the First World War, but the gesture of drawing on one art for the enrichment of another—a gesture that Europe had become familiar with since Wagner's generation—was repeated over and over and has come to be an essential characteristic of twentieth-century art. This is not to say that ours is a century of bastard art forms. Quite the contrary: our century has put more rigorously into practice than ever before certain theories concerning the interrelatedness of the arts which were formulated in the nineteenth century, in an effort precisely to strengthen the specific effects of single arts. Today we can speak, without metaphor or exaggeration, of musicians learning from painters, writers learning from dance, and dramatists learning from cinema.

Cinema, it might in fact be argued, has been the most active catalyst in this process of convergence and exchange. Cinema was first evaluated as an art form in terms of a fantastic amalgamation. Phrases such as "a powerful synthesis" and "an extended expression" of all the arts[1] echoed important aesthetic platforms of the nineteenth century. The theory of the arts' interrelations had an early implicit spokesman in Hegel. His *Aesthetics* (1801) corrected, among other things, a tendency among philosophers to think of the arts in terms of limits and restrictions, as had been polemically maintained by Lessing in *The Laocoön* (1766). Hegel searched instead for the underlying similarities, just as Wagner would when he described his great *Gesamtkunstwerk,* the *Musikdrame.* Thus, it was not surprising to hear Georges Méliès, one of the first movie-makers, speak of the cinema's capacity for combining the arts in equal doses: dramatic art, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, mechanics, manual labor.[2]

If the cinema could, and still can, be seen as a hodgepodge of various artistic impulses, its finished product has at the same time been capable of shocking the other arts into an awareness of their own potentials. Here I am thinking of the cinematic inspiration of the staging decor of Meyerhold and Brecht, the juxtapositional methods common to both the movies and surrealistic art—but most of all, the techniques of discontinuity and montage in the

modern novel. It will be the primary objective of this study to trace this exchange of energies from the movies, an art originally so thoroughly informed by nineteenth-century sensibility, to the modern novel, whose major innovations will be seen as closely patterned after those of the cinema.

Such a view is by no means new. In a sense, the demonstration of the cinematic quality of the modern novel has been available ever since the first reader of *Ulysses* noted the montage technique of "The Wandering Rocks" or since Dos Passos included the "Newsreel" and "Camera Eye" sections in *U.S.A.* In other words, certain modern novels proclaim themselves cinematic.

The need for the present study arises, then, not so much from the lack of insight among general readers of the modern novel, but rather from the dearth of discussions of novel and cinema that seek, at a theoretical level, an explanation for the cinema's impact. The basic conviction of a relation between the two media has most often led to a search for the "laws" governing and limiting each medium[3] or to juxtaposing *grosso modo* the two arts in order to deduce, largely at the level of production history, superficial similarities.[4]

On the other hand, the earliest and probably most influential American work on novel and cinema not only skirts the theoretical problems at stake but also concentrates its efforts on one particular practice: adapting novels into films. Such a focus leads to the regrettable conclusion that "The great innovators of the twentieth century in film and novel both have had . . . little to do with each other, have gone their own ways alone, always keeping a firm but respectful distance."[5] By insisting, without further investigation, on the notion of a strict, unalterable *difference* of communication in novel and film, word against image, this view ignores the very real, observable phenomenon of *mutation* among such signs, which has been documented since the early nineteenth century.

A great number of books have been written on the movies qua movies. The scope of the present study is such that the discrete development of cinema and the methods of individual masterpieces cannot be given any more than cursory consideration. From a methodological vantage point, however, I have taken much from recent studies of the cinema. For example, a basic assumption I make is that both words and images are sets of signs that belong to systems and that, at a certain level of abstraction, these systems bear resemblances to one another. More specifically, within each such system there are many different codes (perceptual, referential, symbolic). What makes possible, then, a study of the relation between two separate sign systems, like novel and film, is the fact that the same codes may reappear in more than one system.[6]

From the moment visual and verbal elements are seen as component parts of one global system of meaning, the affinities between the two arts come into focus. Eisenstein, who was deeply sensitive to the cinema's indirect ancestors among the other arts, compares literature to the movies because it, too, is an "art of viewing—not only the eye, but *viewing*—both meanings embraced in this term."[7] The modern semiotician adopts the view of Eisenstein and, with a new vocabulary, goes further than ever before in breaking down the barrier that has existed, in theoretical terms, between the verbal and the visual. The very mechanisms of language systems can thus be seen to carry on diverse and

complex interrelations: "one function, among others, of language is to name the units segmented by vision (but also to help segment them), and . . . one function, among others, of vision is to inspire semantic configurations (but also to be inspired by them)."[8]

Eisenstein provided one of the earliest practical explorations into the relation between novel and cinema in a famous essay entitled "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today." His main point is to demonstrate the manner in which Griffith's montage techniques are indebted to Dickens's use of close-up details, as in the opening pages of *The Cricket and the Hearth.* This is part of Eisenstein's more general enterprise to show that montage composition is not unique to the cinema but a fundamental technique of all art. In this light, the observations he makes are mainly instructive in what they reveal about Dickens's sophisticated practices. The analogy with Griffith has always seemed weak to me.

The essay points in passing, however, to another kind of indebtedness that characterizes early films: the more or less blatant appropriation of the themes and content of the nineteenth-century bourgeois novel. Herein, certainly, lies the more fundamental connection between Dickens and Griffith. Like most of his contemporaries, Griffith raided the nineteenth century in search of a certain sort of adventure and a certain brand of sentiment. The melodramatic and sentimental motifs characteristic of Dickens's fiction, along with the themes of the sacrosanct homogeneity of the family, the privileges of owning property, the primacy of the individual, can be seen to be lifted intact into the early films of Griffith, those of the Biograph years. The reliance of early films on a predigested, tried-and-true content remains one of the most important defining characteristics of this period of film history.

The details of such a comparative content analysis need to be worked out on a full scale. Similar parallels have been suggested, such as that of historical analogy. The cinema develops as a mass medium through stages that are roughly analogous to the novel's development, so that one might speak of a parallel sequence of sensibilities in passing from Fielding to Richardson and from Porter to Griffith.[9] Such parallels have their pertinence in a discussion of this sort, but the present study locates the primary nexus elsewhere.

This is not to say that I wish to avoid the dynamics of history. In fact, the novel's liability to a massive technical reorientation that cinema fostered was due in large measure to the decline of the bourgeois novel toward the end of the nineteenth century. An important argument to be expanded in the course of this study concerns the type of basic remodeling the novel underwent during the "impressionist" era. Bored with the prevailing trend of an inflexibly omniscient, authoritative narrator, innovative novelists, beginning with James and Conrad, sought to lay bare the process of fiction by inserting a highly self-conscious narrator as first-person teller or third-person "central reflector." The emphasis, as a result, was on *showing* how the events unfold dramatically rather that recounting them, from an aloof position, as already having taken place; on conveying richly complex experiences through a shifting narrative perspective, and on opting for a potential energy required from the reader to reconstruct into a cohesive whole what often came across in fragmented bits.

What I anticipate, actually, on the part of readers familiar with the modern literary tradition, is not a reservation regarding the importance of history, but rather a skepticism regarding the unilateral manner in which I argue for the impact of the cinema. Some may respond that it is mere coincidence that the earmarks of modern fiction share so many technical and ontological qualities with the movies, that these earmarks must be located first and foremost within the evolution of the novel as literary genre. For me, the two perspectives are not mutually exclusive. There is no doubt about the modern novel's responsiveness to an inner dynamic; Flaubert foresaw with uncanny acuteness many of the directions the new novel would take. But to deny the impact of the cinema would be like denying the importance of science to Romantic poetry; beyond the constraints felt by the writers as coming from their specifically literary forebears, a new cultural phenomenon was forcing itself into their awareness and into the way in which their generation saw the world.

A further point should be made in order to bring into sharper perspective the historical encounter between the novel and the cinema. As the movies cultivated their built-in potentials for narration and emerged as the dominant form of mass entertainment during the 1910s, the novel encountered a crisis of survival unknown to it since the early eighteenth century. The attitude of contemporary observers—an attitude that persists today—was that the novel was likely to disappear altogether: "'The pictures' are driving literature off the parlor table."[10] The novel faced a fate similar to that of figurative painting when photography preempted the field of pictorial verism in the late nineteenth century. It was not really a question of struggling to win over an audience in either case, but rather of discovering new methods of handling more or less traditional material. Degas disarmed the adversary (in this oversimplified schema) by taking up and putting to use devices that were peculiar to photography. In a similar way, the innovative novelist, the novelist sensitive to the vast areas of narratable experience that had been either emptied of relevance or recharged through new manners of seeing, was to exploit to his or her own advantage the techniques of fragmented vision and discontinuity peculiar to the movies.

Cinema has a special relation to the twentieth century and to the development of modernism. It might easily be argued that every avant-garde movement since 1900 owes something to the new visions afforded by the movies. Cubism and futurism both bear resemblances to cinema insofar as they emphasize an analytic, even mechanical, way of viewing the world. Surrealists, who were among the first to suggest the similarity between dream work and film work, use methods of collage and discontinuity that recall similar methods to cinema. Indeed, surrealists like Picabia, Man Ray, and Buñuel were the first to experiment with the medium and apparatus of the movies in a dynamic way.

The reasons for this close alliance between the principles and special capacities of cinema and the general aesthetic development of the twentieth century are difficult to explain in detail. A point of departure to such an investigation, however, could very well be the amazing similarity between the

potentially disorienting capabilities of cinema, in terms of space and time, and the principles of Einstein's new physics. One of the basic premises of the theory of relativity is that phenomena can no longer be measured exactly and absolutely within a model of static spatial relations and clock time. The simple interdependent yet mutually exclusive relation between space and time posited by Newtonian physics is no longer tenable. Cinema, as is well known by the average movie-goer, has unique capabilities of compressing and expanding time, confining or enlarging the space of vision and the sharpness of its precision. Cinematic articulation, in fact, as will be further discussed below, depends on a special interrelationship between the spatial and temporal dimensions. It seems almost as though Minkowski were speaking of the cinematic experience when, in 1908, he proclaimed, "Henceforth, space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality."[11]

Modern social and psychoanalytic theory has often formulated its tenets in ways surprisingly analogous to a cinematic framework and the cinematic apparatus. Jean-Louis Baudry has explained in some detail the manner in which both Marx and Freud took recourse in cinematic metaphors to explain some of their most fundamental doctrines.[12] Ideology, for Marx, is that which forces the subject to see social relations in a precisely inverted order—just as if one were looking through the aperture of a camera obscura. This image of the world upside down has, of course, persisted in Marxist sociological analyses, and contemporary discussions of film and ideology have investigated the implications of the ironic fact that the camera, a modern version of that camera obscura used during the Renaissance to perfect vision with "correct" perspective, can thus be considered bound, historically, by a limited, essentially bourgeois manner of representation.[13]

Freud's description of the subject's dream process, similarly, bears an uncanny resemblance to the process of viewing a film. As the subject sleeps, images are projected onto the "dream screen" of his perceptual apparatus.[14] These images originate in the unconscious, and so the subject is never aware of the manner of functioning of this projection.

But while social and psychoanalytic theory may resort to cinema mainly as a convenient metaphor, the general aesthetics of modernism can be seen to rely more and more on a notion of art and artistic production that would have been untenable within the cultural context prior to the advent of the movies. Here, still, cinema is not exactly touted, as music was in the nineteenth century, as some sort of ideal art. (It is nevertheless often referred to as the "typical" art of the twentieth century.) Rather, the technological constitution of the cinematic process—from recording to editing to projecting—becomes a model for the relation between the configurating signifiers of art and the signifying apparatus.

The dominant informing characteristic of representational art is the transparency of the mode by which the fictional world is created. It is as though we were to become oblivious, in a realistic novel or a figurative painting, to the materials that produced the world or the figures. Modernism reverses this aesthetic. Art becomes interesting, captivating, compelling pre-

cisely when attention is called to the apparatus of production. For the Russian Formalists, for example, one means of producing the effect of "defamiliarization" they considered essential to great art was to bring into the foreground of a fiction not the action of the characters but the action of the scriptor writing. While such a device can be found as early as Sterne's *Tristram Shandy,* often called for this reason an uncannily modern work, we find it with greater frequency and regularity as we enter the twentieth century.

Any modern view that values this foregrounding of the apparatus must at some point hold its underlying tenets over against the cinema. In cinema, more than in any previous art, the production of a fiction is entirely dependent on the tools of modern technology. It can be asserted without exaggeration that the cinematic experience is impossible without a simultaneous experience of its apparatus—at least of the projector. It is true that cinema includes a strong representational tradition, that of Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s. But it is just as pertinent to mention the countertrend of Russians like Eisenstein and Vertov, the surrealists during the 1920s, and the explicitly anti-Hollywood avant-garde European films and underground American films of the 1960s. In these works not only do the conditions of projection remind the spectator of the film's apparatus, but the techniques of montage and camera movement insist that the spectator pay at least as much attention to the film's process of production as to its unfolding fiction.

It is for this reason that I will consider as extremely pertinent to the development of a modernist narrative the theories and practice of Eisenstein, in particular the notion of montage. By the same token, I see very little relevance in the theories of "invisible editing" propounded by Bazin and others. Those films which seek to transport the spectator entirely into their fictional world have more in common, formally and ideologically, with the realist novel of the nineteenth century, whose bankruptcy had already been attested to by the James-Ford-Conrad group. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that I draw few examples from the Hollywood film. Instead, two levels of self-consciousness in film production will be insisted on as seminal in the development of an aesthetic of modernism: the intrinsic dependence of cinema on recording, editing, and projection machinery to achieve its net effect, and the more specialized foregrounding of the cinematic apparatus in the montage tradition of film-making.

It is not, then, in terms of a vague *Zeitgeist* that the basic parallels between novel and cinema will be argued. I perceive the impact of cinema to be precise and describable. Although there may be no statistics and little documentary evidence to bear out this thesis, I maintain that the contours of modern narrative would not be what they are without the precedents set by the movies.

Everyday experience in modern civilization, with its bombardment of visual and aural signs of all sorts, demonstrates, it seems to me, in a practical and immediate way, the constant interference taking place between diverse language systems and suggests both the theoretical affinities of these systems and the means by which mutual illustration and reduplication has taken place in practice. What is necessary today is not to take these interferences for granted

but to return to that golden era of metamorphosis and massive cultural change at the beginning of this century, when modernism first discovered itself and, in particular, learned with surprise the pleasure of calling attention to itself.

The line of argument developed in the following pages begins with a careful consideration of the informing principles of cinema itself in the domains of the plastic arts, popular media, and technology. On the basis of this background, an analysis is made of both inherited and inherent traits of cinema. Part I, "Convergence," ends with a comparative study of film and novel techniques, with an aim toward discovering the mechanisms by which literary narrative could be exploded by the cinematic example. Part II, "Exchange," details the specific ways in which the modern novel registered the impact of the cinema. This part includes detailed analyses of five modern novels treated not in succession but as a constant body of exemplary material that can be left and then returned to when needed.

The overarching rationale for this organization is as follows: given the origin, informing traits, and nature of the cinematic medium, aspects of modern literary narrative such as radical temporal and perspectival distortion and discontinuity must be seen in rigorously analogous terms. Replaced in a general cultural framework, this study seeks not an origin but simply a first solid example of how powerful the precedent of one art could be for the practitioners of another, how one set of codes became the common tools of artists working in widely disparate fields.

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The birth of the movies in 1895 and their rapid rise to popularity must be considered from several different viewpoints in order to account for the revolution they fomented in taste and perception. Even before taking stock of the aesthetic and philosophic significance held within this new art, it is necessary to examine three ways in which it functions as a watershed of nineteenth-century intellectual development: (1) to synthesize disparate arts, schools, attitudes, and trends; (2) to reclaim and sublimate vast areas of second-rate, "subcultural" art; (3) to incorporate in itself and galvanize the fruits of modern technology.

The first and, for our purposes, most important function of the movies was to synthesize the goals of impressionism and naturalism, the two literary and artistic schools predominant during the preceding three decades. Most closely related in a material way to photography (etymologically "writing with light"), the motion picture was immediately able to register with a high degree of fidelity the changing light values, natural or artificial, on the objects around us. There was no need for the movie-maker to break down and analyze the process of illumination in the external world, since the camera is itself a highly perfected mechanical tool for doing just this. The degree and quality of illumination by the source light on an object is directly registered by the celluloid treated with light-sensitive silver bromide.

Since the sun was the only available source of light in the first years, the movies were by necessity an *en-plein-air* art. (Studios came about as the result not so much of powerful artificial lights as of Méliès's sophisticated needs.)

The camera could be brought to the raw material itself. It stood amidst nature, from the polar ice-cap to the poverty-stricken streets of large cities, always on the point of conducting an "experiment" in the naturalist manner. The portability and apparent ubiquity of the camera, responsible, in fact, for the experimental air of those first essentially documentary film-clips (e.g., *La sortie des usines Lumière, Fire Rescue Scene*), represented the complete reduction of external events to mechanically gathered data. From this point, the "art" would depend more and more on the ways in which the camera was manipulated and the shots assembled.

The relationship between the movie frame and the space it defined underwent in a few years an evolution roughly similar to that of impressionism. Just as the painters gradually forsook the traditional unique point of view and the Renaissance scenographic conception of space, culminating in the unusual *encadrages* of Degas,[15] so it became clear almost from the beginning that the specificity of cinematic art was arrived at not by recording a stage play but, rather, by choosing that angle of vision by which the moving figure defined most dynamically its field of activity.[16] It is tempting to carry the comparison even further and to see a correspondence between the impressionists' dissolution of the Renaissance laws of perspective and the cinema's dynamization of the static visual relationships in the still photograph. Such a comparison is all the more compelling in view of the fact that Leonardo da Vinci and Piero della Francesca based their theories on the same camera obscura that was, materially, the matrix of the modern photographic camera.[17] The power of the movies to present diverse viewpoints of the same object or action brought to an end—more definitively than impressionism ever could—the reproduction of the "circumscribed space" associated either actually or hypothetically with the stage. (Only cubism sought to achieve the multiplicity of viewpoint—perceived all at once, globally—which the movies automatically presented through time.)[18] André Malraux points out that cinema as a means of expression (and not of reproduction) dates from the time a movie was grasped as a series of shots and not as the recording of a real or fictional event.[19] This succession of diverse viewpoints, part and parcel of the montage process, led to the spatial and temporal simultaneity that was to become the epitome of cinematic experience. The cinema did not simply endow the still photo with motion; it raised to a new, decidedly visual level the investigation of change and mobility, which, with more or less urgency, had preoccupied the European mind since the end of the Renaissance.

One might be led at this point, along with Malraux and Herbert Read, to place movies (or what I have called the cinematic experience) alongside all the baroque, mannerist, "non-naturalist" styles of art—the Egyptian friezes, the statues of Bernini, Diderot's *claveçin.* But this would be to neglect the fact that the images in the movies bear an unprecedented resemblance to their "models," that historically and aesthetically the movies are a highly "naturalistic" medium—in Worringer's sense of an art that engenders delight by giving us a vivid impression of participating in the organic.[20] The movies did not have to renounce the photograph to achieve its dynamization. They did not reject the set line of photographic harmony, but, as in El Greco's paintings,

put it to work in a new way. In fact, the movies can claim recognition as both "naturalistic" and "non-naturalistic": their paradoxical character of actual flatness and experiential depth bears this out. According to most theorists, it is movement within the frame which, dynamizing the still photographic image by conferring a deeper sense of corporeality on the objects filmed, makes them appear to stand out in slight, even if illusory, relief. In Edgar Morin's words: "Movement is the decisive power of reality; it is in and through movement that time and space are real."

Rudolf Arnheim explains this stereoscopic effect as resulting from the juxtaposition of the two-dimensional frame of reference, the actual filmed image, with the three-dimensional frame of reference to which the moving figures constantly allude and which corresponds to the spectator's own everyday experience. Movie-goers of the early days, unaccustomed to the new and unusual effects of moving images, experienced the impression of depth to an exaggerated degree, as is clear from Vachel Lindsay's description of the "dumb giants" in the foreground of the movie screen, whose bodies "are in high sculptural relief." As in impressionist painting, a certain apprenticeship of the eye was necessary, first for the spectator to seize the fact of the motion picture, then for him to neutralize those extreme first reactions to its diverse effects. British audiences failed to follow G. A. Smith's early montagelike combination (1901) of long and close shots of the same action. D. W. Griffith's first close-ups (1908) were met with shock and disapproval at the chopping off of human bodies.[21]

Regardless of the exaggerated quality of some of these early reactions, they do tend to bear out the physiological argument that a depth-effect is created. Once again, out of this combination of actual flatness and experiential depth, the cinema represents a synthesis of two fundamental, contradictory world-views that have given rise to art throughout history: the "naturalistic" and the "non-naturalistic."

The movies came equipped, then, to respond to the aspirations of the most recent exemplars of these tendencies, the naturalist and the impressionist. Their power to seize the external world directly and with a high degree of objectivity satisfied the "realist" exigencies of both schools. On the one hand, since there was virtually no lag between the phenomenon and its recording, nature was caught *sur le vif:* each shot was potentially a miraculous preservation of the "instant fugitif." On the other hand, the mechanical nature of this recording and its subsequent projection was a reminder of the scientific means by which the image was captured.

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Everyone knows that the cinema, besides being the first totally new art for several thousand years, is also the first art to be collectively arrived at and the first artistic brain-child of modern industrial science. As the other arts, such as writing, painting, and music, are generally considered to be creative activities whose origins are untraceable except to myth (hence, practically données of the human spirit) and whose developments are inseparable from the history of man's understanding of himself, one might go further and say that the cin-

ema is the only truly *invented* art. The third important function to be examined, then, is the nature of this unusual birthright: the movies' unique exploitation of the scientific and industrial insights that marked nearly every aspect of nineteenth-century expression.

From the "episodic" cave paintings of Lascaux and Altamira to the Egyptian friezes, from the Greek metope sculptures to the medieval tryptichs and "Stations of the Cross," from the camera obscura to the magic lantern (which, coming as it does from ancient China, suggests an entirely different catalogue), men have always had what may be called the cinematic desire—the desire to reproduce artificially forms in motion. We know that Eisenstein not only traced an informal history of "pre-cinematic" literature and theater but also went so far as to consider the montage principle—his own unique "dialectic montage" capable of generating ideas—as essential to the very condition of art. For such speculations, however, it seems most reasonable to postulate some historical cut-off point that marks the inauguration of what Hassan El Nouty has called the "project du cinéma."[22] Not to be confused with the cinematic *desire* or *dream,* the beginnings of the cinema project must correspond to a time when the two essentials of motion pictures were at hand: the pictures (i.e., the photographic principle) and the motion (i.e., the means of mechanically synthesizing the discrete part of any action).

While extensive experimentation throughout the eighteenth century was conducted on the basis of light sensitivity in silver chlorides and nitrates, no single process was discovered that could retain images for more than a few hours (and how ironically fitting is this series of brilliant but ephemeral images in the *siècle des lumières*!). It was in 1816 that Niepce achieved the first successful photographic fixation of images and in 1829 that he went into business with Daguerre to promote this process. While the effect known as "persistence of vision" appears in the works of Ptolemy and Lucretius and was revived during the eighteenth century, there was no way of putting it to work until controlled experiments had demonstrated how and why the phenomenon is produced. It was in 1824 that the English doctor and mathematician Roget conducted experiments with turning wheels and vertical grooves, and in 1829 that Plateau enunciated the law governing the "persistence of vision" and constructed the first motion-synthesizing machine, the *phênakistiscope.*[23]

My purpose here is not to detail the history of cinematography, but simply to set down a few key dates that suggest the time when men first had the theoretical and material means of realizing the cinematic desire. Clearly, it was during the 1820s that the cinema project first got under way. Even more clearly, it was the scientific know-how and creative inventiveness of this period that made such a project possible. Phenomena that had been observed and toyed with by ancient and "modern" thinkers alike, in particular by the founders of most nineteenth-century scientific tenets and methodologies, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton—phenomena that had been philosophized practically out of existence by enthusiastic amateurs during the eighteenth century—these phenomena were now being analyzed, described, and synthesized with the aid of a relative newcomer: the machine.

The gradual perfection of the photographic medium, including tests on

chemicals and gelatins and the development of a sufficiently supple (eventually celluloid) film base, has relatively little importance for us, apart from the obvious implementation of scientific expertise. The final achievement of motion, on the other hand, has enormous importance, as it links ancient, if not prehistoric, ambitions to the movies and to certain concerns of other arts as well.

The pleasure of seeing objects in motion is a primordial one and, according to some commentators, may sometimes correspond to the pattern or form that human thought takes: that is, succession through space provides a concrete embodiment of that vaguely felt process of mental succession.[24] Edgar Morin has pointed out that what differentiated Lumière from Edison was his realization "that people would be amazed, before anything else, at seeing that which doesn't amaze them: their houses, their faces, the setting of their everyday life."[25] He adds that modern primitives, such as the Moroccan Berbers, experience the same joyful astonishment at seeing familiar objects brought to life.

Western man's comprehension of motion was more or less the same from Aristotle's time to the seventeenth century. Movement through space was generalized into one or another *quality* in an attempt to grasp the action as a form of repose. Scholastic thinkers still used Aristotelian logic to crush Galileo's new ideas of a universe based on mathematically precise movements.[26] As soon as mathematics had been accepted as a valid tool for interpreting the world, Leibniz, who once envisaged a multimedia entertainment with "Magic Lanterns . . . flights, trick meteors, all sorts of optical marvels," could start speaking of *progress*.[27] From this time on there was at least one project in the air that occupied most theoreticians, that of man's eventual domination, by mechanical means, of nature.

But though the methodology became either more mechanistic, as in La Mettrie's casting aside the soul Descartes had reserved for man and describing him as just another locomotive machine (*L'Homme-machine*), or more materialistic, as in Diderot's prophetic but as yet unprovable theories of molecular motion (*Le Rêve de d'Alembert,* 1769); the means of analyzing movement with precision was still a long way off. There was still too great a gap between science and technology, between the abstraction of progress and its material fruits. It was not until around 1860 that E.-J. Marey invented a way of charting movement in graphic form. Before this, the most advanced means of tracing a moving body had been by representing a series of Cartesian conic sections. Marey discovered that movement could be translated into a curve and demonstrated for the first time mechanically that movement can only be accurately described by movement.[28]

As for the analysis and reproduction of movement, quite the opposite was true. When Leland Stanford, founder and president of the Central Pacific Railway and ex-governor of California, asked the photographer Eadweard Muybridge to demonstrate that a horse has all four feet off the ground at one point in his gallop, Muybridge had to use a serial method. He lined up twelve still-cameras in a row and tied trip-strings from them across the path of a running horse. These key experiments, later expanded to include twenty-four successive shots, resulted in the projection of discontinuous, sequential photo-

graphs that, for the first time, gave a totally convincing impression of movement (1877). Later experiments and inventions, in particular Marey's "photographic gun" which used the principle of the revolver to take in a few seconds a large number of pictures of a "sighted" object (1882), led quickly to the perfection of the motion picture camera and projector more or less in the form as we know it today.

Increasing mechanization throughout the nineteenth century made the final realization of the movies almost inevitable. In a world where progress was for the first time truly "palpable," "the awe and reverence once reserved for a Deity and later bestowed upon the visible landscape was directed toward technology or, rather, the technological conquest of matter."[29] As the idea of movement and of its reproduction changed, artistic form, goaded by technological advances, underwent a similar and correspondent metamorphosis.

> Until now a form had always been engendered by rest; henceforth it arises *also* from movement. . . . Dynamism is the golden rule of our era. Everything rolls, everything flows and is transformed. Societies as well as objects and forms. Equilibrium is no longer in immobility but in movement. We have a direct, intimate experience of movement. When we watch a film as well as when we move about through the world, or when we look at those matter-generating or matter-destroying machines. It was inevitable that art would come to express, by appropriate means, this new experience that man possesses of the external world.[30]

It is not surprising that the movies express best of all the arts man's "new experience" in the technological world. Their popular name itself ("movies," more appropriate than a metonymic name such as "the film") stresses at once their mechanical attributes and the fundamental mobility that distinguishes them from other arts. Motion, conceived of as the basic phenomenon whereby space is delineated through time, is at the essence of the movies' form as much as it is emblemed in their name. The term used to describe a film's compositional process, "montage," is the French word originally referring to the industrial assembly of finished products from individual parts. This is likewise not so surprising a metaphor, since all cinematographic activities, particularly the recording and the subsequent "re-activating" of motion, depend on highly developed machines; and film production, often compared to the collective construction of a medieval cathedral, is more akin to the assembly-line process than to painting a picture or writing a poem. At every juncture of production, whether between director and actor or between actor and spectator, between cameraman and celluloid or between celluloid and editor, a machine significantly intervenes.

But if the movies represent the most important artistic exploitation of technological progress, they also stand as a response to a struggle that was growing throughout the nineteenth century between the arts and the sciences. In the eighteenth century, before the practical fruits of machine technology were available on a large scale, there was little or no contradiction between artistic and scientific endeavors: the Cartesian dream of possessing nature was still tenable. In fact, science, from Aristotle on, had always been a main arm

of philosophy, a set of *technai* no more threatening to ethical man than artistic techniques. But even by the end of the eighteenth century, a cleavage set in that was coterminous with, because in many ways indistinguishable from, the spirit of Romanticism. The very machine that was to liberate man from ancient modes of production and give him maximum leisure, turned out to chain him to a new, unnatural monster that spread misery, dullness, and ugliness. Diderot was probably the last of the Renaissance-type universal achievers who could yoke scientific investigation with aesthetic creation, rationalism with sensibility. And it was a fairly shaky union at that. With Rousseau, the artist, the man of feeling, rediscovered a world and a register of emotions that had seemingly been neglected by art for centuries. As eighteenth-century rationalism marched on and was transformed into the concrete forms of industrialization of the nineteenth century, the artist and the philosopher became newly aware of the nature and the "natural man" that machine culture would seek to regiment.

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At the end of chapter 1, I discussed how, during the impressionist era, the novel underwent important remodeling. It was, even at that time, a genre overburdened with conventions. Writers like James and Conrad, taking their cue from the earlier French "realist" tradition of Flaubert and Maupassant, sensed a need for the novel's total reorientation. Perhaps influenced by the prevailing doctrines of scientific causality, they posited a new relation between creating subject and created object. By means of a method that may have owed something to the impressionist painters, the emphasis was on showing the object rather than telling about it, on seeing it and making it seen. Since they insisted that their version of reality was more true to *lived* experience, to the interpenetration of present events with past memories, it was natural that they became interested in multiperspectivism: in the radical switching of point of view—even though the most fragmented vision at this period was still usually surmounted by a surface and a structure of cohesion (e.g., *Heart of Darkness, The Ambassadors*). Finally, their impatience with the stock responses established by conventional nineteenth-century fiction led them to emphasize the reader's participation in the elaboration of conceptual images.

It should be clear by this time that the earmarks of this new turn-of-the-century novel dovetail completely with those of the new film sensibility. The advent of the movies served to reinforce the anti-nineteenth-century bias of the radical novelists. Thriving in the midst of a new machine culture and the general change of heart associated with the *contre-décadence,* the movies necessarily took a proscientific, documentary attitude toward the object. All was visual, hence all was shown: rendered, not told. There were, of course, especially from about 1910, explicative titles; but these tended, except in the most blatantly literary cases, to establish a context for the action and to provide certain crucial links that the spectator was not yet accustomed to making.[31] In all cases, from the first Lumière clips forward, signifier and signified were simultaneously present and indivisible: the "fictional" world was immediate, just like the real world.

During this period of growing relativism in all fields, the movies demonstrated most graphically the effects of changing point of view. An object had to be presented from more than one viewpoint in order to suggest its total contour and, in certain cases, its direction of movement. The distance and angle of vision between the object and the camera further attentuated the establishment of anything resembling a fixed or authoritative point of view. So long as the simultaneity of multiple viewpoints was impossible (and cubism was accomplishing this in other arts), an object or action had to be rendered in discontinuous fragments that only in sequence and hence through time could be fully apprehended.

Apprehension, consequently, required from the outset, the active participation of the movie spectator. . . . On the purely denotative level of understanding, a mass of convenances had to be accepted by the movie-goer before the shots that flashed before his eyes could make sense or assume the outline of a story. Logical leaps for economy's sake (ellipsis), allusion to events off the screen, outside the frame of reference (e.g., the passage of a train without a shot of the train in Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris,* 1923), dissection of the established space through the use of close-ups—all these effects and more demanded a rather sudden accommodation on the part of spectator, like the perceptual adjustments required of untutored medieval readers who were at first unable to connect the units of writing. The spectator's task was not simply to see what was being shown to him more vividly than ever before, but also to see what was being revealed purely by implication.

The spectator's acquired ability to perceive and retain a total spatial entity by means of the image of a part only, like the rhetorical process known as synecdoche, has been interpreted by some as the foundation for all the other aspects of this visual apprenticeship and one that explains the movie spectator's unique position vis-à-vis the art object.[32]

Common to all these new perspectives by which the movies nourished certain iconoclastic tendencies of the modern novelist was the technique of montage. In a great deal of writing on montage, what is emphasized is the disjunctive, nonsequential nature of the two or more shots joined together. Eisenstein himself stresses the gap between two assembled shots and the conflict that their juxtaposition ought to engender. These descriptions are all perfectly accurate; but they neglect the inevitable continuity imposed on the film at the time of its projection and viewing. When two shots, mutually illogical, unconnected, or even contradictory, are brought together in the film, the automatic and relentless flow of images forces at least the appearance of sequence. There is no such thing as a non sequitur in the movies.

Even in films that seek to challenge our expectations about continuity, like Buñuel's *Chien andalou,* we sense the power of the film's relentless flow. The sole difference is the opaqueness of interrelationship that results in such a film. In the sequence in which the major male figure reveals the insect-infested wound on his palm to the female protagonist, the montage sequence is carried along not in the least by the laws of cause and effect but rather by a vaguely connoted notion of sexual impropriety, perhaps a metaphorical externalization of the man's thoughts. The woman's consternation at seeing the wound is

transformed into outright scandal when the man wipes the palm across his mouth, which becomes healed shut and encircled by hair. Beside herself, the woman looks under her arm to discover the hair gone from her armpit.

Of even greater consequence in such an experimental film is the imagistic matching that carries over from other sequences, like the prickly sea urchin, which suggests that whatever tentativeness is involved in making the connections here will be graphically resolved or reinforced at another point. In other terms, such films rely almost exclusively on erratically formed paradigmatic axes which, far more than the syntagmatic or linear axis, hold the work together.

Thus, the spectator may bring any degree of cognitive or psychological resistance to a film, and yet the image track will constantly seem to be asserting that all follows, as demonstrated by the Kuleshov experiment, discussed below. This primary antinomy of film experience, which can only be called discontinuous continuity, explains the ease of switching cinematic point of view, the virtual disappearance of the need for author or narrator, and the consequential shifting to the spectator of the burden of forging the connective links.

Before moving on to the specific means by which cinema was to serve as object of inspirational predilection for the novel, it would be useful to reclarify the pertinence of the choices made amid the tremendously diverse cultural phenomena of this period. . . . My major purpose is to detail, at both the historical and theoretical levels, the palpitating openness, formally, of nearly all the arts during this heyday of relativism which characterizes the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Forms and genres within specific arts converge, and arts converge with one another as well. How can one do justice to this period, it may be asked, however, without analyzing the *Sacre du printemps,* Schoenberg's twelve-tone row, the stage sets of Meyerhold and Piscator, and paintings by Picasso, Braque, Léger? Why should one privilege, in other words, the relation between cinema and literature when the "convergence" alluded to is by no means restricted to these two fields of artistic activity?

In comparison with other artistic cross-fertilizations of the modern period, such as the yoking of verbal text and plastic configuration by the surrealists and Klee or the use of film clips by Brecht, the convergence of cinema and novel is at once more pervasive and more typical. More typical because, in fact, the actual mixtures of arts have been rareties, seemingly doomed, no matter how daring, to the history of artistic curiosities. Even cinema, as I have argued elsewhere, will not permit of straight literary emulation, for fear of betraying its own specificity.[33] The more common, and yet far more difficult to define, phenomenon is the formal mimickry and outright borrowing whereby one art will suddenly leap into the mode of another or demonstrate an apparently incongruous yearning for the qualities of that other art. The convergence focused on here is also more pervasive because it deals with the two most popular arts of the last three hundred years. As will become clear, the capacities for language and narrative evident, albeit in very different ways, in novel and cinema, provide the conditions for speaking of this special convergence as exemplary. Furthermore, it is hoped that the very typicality and pervasiveness of this convergence, far from throwing other such phenomena

unduly into shadow, will serve as model for the abundant research that still needs to be done in the general field of cross-art affinities.

The idea that through discontinuity a more dynamic continuity can be achieved is perhaps the cornerstone of twentieth-century art. We see it in the paintings of the cubists and futurists, in the music of Debussy and Stravinsky, in the poetry of the imagists, of Eliot, of Apollinaire, and in all forms of surrealist art. It is also at the very root of the "classic" modern novel.[34] "The discontinuity of the plot and the scenic development, the sudden emersion of the thoughts and moods, the relativity and the inconsistency of the time standards, are what remind us in the works of Proust and Joyce, Dos Passos, and Virginia Woolf of the cuttings, dissolves and interpolations of the film, and it is simply film magic when Proust brings two incidents, which may lie thirty years apart, as closely together as if there were only two hours between them."[35] Joseph Frank notes the same sort of discontinuous continuity in describing the "spatial form" of the modern novel.[36] In order for the reader to put together the elements of narration and character portrayal, often presented discontinuously (i.e., by breaking up the traditional chronological flow of time), he must establish a continuity in his own mind, reflexively. Hence the notion of "reflexive reference," whereby the discrete threads and levels of narration are brought together by the reader in an instant of time, as if they were fleshed out before him, spatially composed.

In fact, the growing modern need to *posit* continuity over the increasing discontinuity and fragmentation of experience might be seen to transcend literature and art altogether (without, however, receiving any better formulations from other sources). Hans Meyerhoff has pointed out the persistence with which philosophers, from Kant and his "transcendental unity of apperception," to Bergson who took over Leibniz's definition of the self as "unity within multiplicity," to Whitehead and other modern "rationalists," have wished to establish a unity of selfhood by assuming the interpenetration of time and self.[37]

The montage sense, which can be very generally defined as continuity out of discontinuity, forms a conceptual basis to many of these developments in modern thought and artistic creation. The most innovative and ultimately influential techniques of the movies all proceed from the montage principle, especially insofar as the physical process of montage exploits the fundamental interdependence of space and time. . . . The very event that gave rise to the first forms of montage resulted from an accidental tampering with cinematic time. Before Méliès's discovery at the Place de l'Opéra in 1896, the cinematograph (which was precisely for this reason not yet the motion-picture camera, as Edgar Morin explains) consistently recorded external events in terms of chronological time, continuously, like a stage play, without gap or incision.[38] The famous accident occurred when Méliès's camera jammed for a minute and then continued running as before. The rushes showed images of people, carriages, and horses that were suddenly, at the point of mechanical failure, transformed into other images because of the lag in time. This incident led, in the short run, to all of Méliès's disappearing tricks on the screen and, in the long run, to much wider application of the stop-camera technique, which

automatically created a discrepancy between chronological and referential time. No narrative progression was possible so long as the camera lens was trained on one set of people and objects and the celluloid kept rolling without a halt.[39] (Hence, the "single-event," essentially documentary quality of early film-strips: a train coming into a station, an acrobat act, the coronation of a queen.) Once the camera was intentionally stopped, chronological time no longer corresponded exactly to referential time, once absence and allusion entered into combination with the transcription of presence, then was narration possible. Thus, film negates its regulatory chronological time so as to present a diegetic sequence in time.

From this negation of time, a function of the stop-camera technique, proceed the many tamperings with diegetic time that were to prove so inspiring to artists of other media. Fast- and slow-motion, reverse motion (as in Lumière's *Charcuterie mécanique*) dramatically demonstrated the crucial dependence of filmic time on the spatiality of its hardware, the way in which filmic time can be "reduced to the level of a dimension analogous to space."[40] The most significant of these means of undoing chronological time was Eisenstein's "expansion of time" in the *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). A sailor on kitchen patrol comes upon a plate marked "Give us this day our daily bread" and throws it against the table in a rage. This single action is of paramount importance to the film's general development, because it marks the beginning of a defiant resoluteness in all the sailors that leads to mutiny and ultimately to the 1905 revolution. By filming it many times from different angles and then editing so that the fragments of each one of the angles overlap one another by a number of frames according to the unitary time of the action, Eisenstein presents an impression of a split-second act that lasts for many seconds on the screen. He shows the same action from many different points of view without either stopping or wholly repeating the action. This technique thus reveals, formally, a profound kinship with earliest attempts to chart motion: the external action is left intact and the recording is at once synchronized (i.e., movement for movement: cf. Marey) and serialized (cf. Muybridge). Insofar as the spectator has the feeling of being not simply in front of the sailor but all around him at once, expansion of time represents the closest cinematic approximation of cubism. It exploits the spatiality of the filmic medium to distort its temporality.

Spatial distortion, like the negation of temporal linearity, can be considered a residual effect of montage. The compression of time is an inevitable side-effect of any edited jump through space; and, in the same manner, as a result of this seeming ubiquity of the movie camera, two places, miles or even continents apart, can be yoked together and space suddenly shrinks. Other specific techniques of spatial disorientation, such as shortening or lengthening the standard 25 cm. lens length and tampering with "normal" depth of field, serve further to throw off conventional point of view and perspective.

The one technique that seems to incorporate many of those mentioned above has been variously called parallel editing, cross-cutting, and (by Metz) "syntagme alterné." These terms refer to the juxtaposition of two or more spatially noncontiguous sequences by alternating segments cut from each one. The most celebrated example of parallel editing is Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916).

Here, we move in discontinuous fashion from one of four time-spaces to another: decadent Babylon, the Passion of Christ, persecution of the Huguenots in sixteenth-century France, and the modern-day drama of struggling strikers and an innocent man sentenced to death. Each parallel story acts as a giant metaphor, or analogy, to the other, the major paradigmatic thrust being, of course, to demonstrate the universality of intolerance and prejudice. Under ordinary circumstances, cinema cannot, any more than literature, present simultaneously two noncontiguous, noncoterminous events. Parallel editing, however, is the technique that most nearly achieves this effect.

If the negation of chronological time was necessary for the advent of montage and the most primitive sequence of events, then we might say that parallel editing and the accompanying idea of going back in diegetic time were necessary for the advent of a full-scale cinematic narrative. Most dissimilar from literature in this respect, where narrativity was for ages considered in mainly linear terms, the cinema seems to have arrived at narrativity *through* the concept of simultaneity. This observation follows from our definition of the movies' fundamental mode of existence: i.e., simultaneity led to truly cinematic (as opposed to theatrical) mise-en-scène because it translates the interdependence of space and time into a unified, seemingly continuous dimension.[41] The method of simultaneity, then, rather than the cinema itself, is the artistic expression of the "space-time continuum."

The intrinsic nature and specific techniques of the cinema: standardization of mimetic objects, temporal distortion, shifting point of view, and discontinuous continuity, were applicable and ultimately transferrable to the novel in very concrete ways (as will be seen in the next section).

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On the surface of it, nothing might seem stranger than to suggest a theoretical or technical relation between the movies and a novel such as *A la recherche du temps perdu.*

> For anyone who hasn't the artistic sense, that is, the submission to internal reality, can be endowed with the faculty of pronouncing judgments endlessly on art. . . . Some maintained that the novel was a sort of cinematographic procession of things. This conception was absurd. Nothing could be further from what we have perceived in reality than such a cinematographic view.[42]

Yet I have pointed out the one-sidedness of the view that cinema is nothing more than a recorder of external reality. In fact, the "cinematographic procession of things" effects temporal leaps and narrative reversals that are, with many differences as regards the multilayered texture of the *Recherche,* surprisingly comparable to the aesthetic vision conditioning Proust's "internal reality." My strategy, therefore, has been not to examine films as individual pieces of art, but rather to take stock of the cinema as a burgeoning art-form that possesses certain highly specific aesthetic tendencies, to consider the advent of the movies in 1895 as a major event in the history of perception that had concrete effects on the whole concept of artistic creation.

The creation of new artistic forms of expression—whether or not within an already highly codified medium—always involves two different activities: taking from the established canons of general or specific aesthetic perception that which is relevant to the artist's present task, and inventing, partly on the basis of this tradition and partly on the basis of the artist's unique experience of being in the world, a specialized means of expression. In this way, the movies drew on a century of technological advancement and artistic experiments that included great flops and great successes, in order to create a new means of expression that scarcely betrays a trace of these forebears. And, according to this same dialectic of creation, the "classic" modern novelists, in inventing the new, highly elastic form for the novel, drew inevitably upon their nineteenth-century predecessors but also upon recent vehicles of extraliterary aesthetic vision, of which the cinematic experience was perhaps the most powerful.

For the cinematic experience included, among its most significant effects for the novelists, a spatial configuration of the flow of time, an innate relativity and perpetual shifting of point of view, and a vivid discontinuity of the narrating material by means of montage.

Consequently, the most dynamic aspects of the new novel form were *simultaneity,* or the depiction of two separate points in space at a single instant of time, *multiperspectivism,* or the depiction of a single event from radically distinct points of view, and *montage,* or the discontinuous disposition in the narrative of diverse diegetic elements.

It is important to note that in each case the novelist has been obliged to strain the limits of his art in order to come to grips with the new vision. Simultaneity and multiperspectivism, the temporal and perceptual aspects of roughly the same sort of experimentation, are fundamentally at odds with the consecutiveness and single-effectiveness of language. In both cases, the novelist exploits the inherent sequentiality of the novel but arranges the material in a stop-start, discontinuous manner so as to suggest ubiquity and coexistence. This new disposition, in turn, by gathering together the concurrent fragments, works against the overriding continuity of language and linguistic expression as a whole.

The straining of the limits of literary expression is a sign of the indelible mark left by the cinema's spatial narration. No other art had ever before been capable of narrating so completely through images, and never before had these images corresponded so completely to the mimetic objects they were modeled on. It is this narrative space, intrinsically discontinuous yet externally timed with electric regularity, constantly in development yet essentially no more of a "procession" than a three-ring circus, that determines a pronounced tendency in the early twentieth century toward the image and elicits in the novel a decidedly visual response.

As I have argued from the beginning, the cinematic precedence need not be considered either a random choice among diverse formative influences on the classic modern novel or a unilateral determining factor. The early twentieth century is a period in which the gradual, at times subterranean, permutations of artistic forms and genres during the preceding century explode erratically into practice. It is thus the period during which the painter and the poet,

the choreographer and the sculptor, the film-maker and the novelist have more to "say" to one another (even if there is no explicit verbal interchange) than ever before. It is also the period in which physics begins to confirm experimentally the relativism of time and visual perspective that previous generations had sensed but only toyed with.

Since the cinema is precisely that invented art-form whose existence is conditioned by modern technology and whose content has consistently been conditioned by prior arts and art-forms, I will conclude by asserting, now a bit more polemically, that the cinematic precedence, given the background and the practical demonstration through texts, has a particularly *privileged position* in determining and analyzing the new forms adopted by the classic modern novel. Those who insist on an even, uninterrupted development from the nineteenth- to the twentieth-century novel turn their backs not only on history but on the development as well of parallel arts which collide crucially at the turn of the century. I have tried to characterize this *coupure* in aesthetic development from many angles. Those who maintain even a clear lineage of the classic modern back to earlier masters (e.g., the Flaubertian tradition) are likely to be ignoring critical differences with regard to the boom era of monopoly capitalism and the heyday of technology and gadgetry it ushered in. I have tried to differentiate clearly between the naïve antipositivism of nineteenth-century writers and the cautious embrace of the Machine Age and its positive potentials by the moderns.

It is as though the 1910s and 1920s generated, on the basis of a sudden radical grasp of a hundred-year heritage of experimentation and iconoclasm in all disciplines, a panoply of artistic exchanges, borrowings, and raids on the self-contained, which would act as source and touchstone throughout the century for the possibilities of interaction among the arts. For this reason, it is not surprising that seminal experimenters like Eisenstein, Vertov, Joyce, and Duchamp are repeatedly invoked in discussions of the renewed breakdown of artistic and generic boundaries that has gained momentum in the 1960s and since. The twentieth-century tradition, it seems to me, is not one requiring a label such as "postmodernism" or "abstract expressionism." Those productions since World War II that really matter are consistently the ones which eschew generic categories (e.g., Godard's documentarylike fiction films or John Ashbery's "poems" that are long prose discourses) or which actively seek contagion from other arts (e.g., Yvonne Rainer's films that include motifs from dance and the photo-roman, or Larry Rivers's paintings that turn the written word back into a visually signifying material and reactivate narrative impulses that work against the static canvas). The twentieth-century tradition, if there is any pertinence to such a term, is marked fundamentally by a desire to go beyond the confines of the single art-form, to open up art to the massive influences of the modern world, from industrial architecture to the form and signification of a coat hanger.

The cinematic precedence for the classic modern novel, therefore, deserves prominence as a primary example of one art technologically ahead of its time that shocked another art into the realization of how it could align itself with the times. It was as though the cinema had become a huge magnet

whose field exerted on other arts like the novel an attraction as powerful and as ineluctable as gravity. The enormous exchange of artistic energies continues and has yet to be measured definitively.

Notes

1. "Naissance du cinéma," in *Intelligence du cinématographe,* ed. Marcel L'Herbier (Paris, 1946), p. 118; intro. to Moussinac's book of the same title. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

2. "Les Vues cinématographiques," in ibid., p. 180; from Méliès's book of the same title, first published in 1907.

3. Etienne Fuzellier, *Cinéma et litterature* (Paris, 1964).

4. Robert Richardson, *Literature and Film* (Bloomington, Ind., 1969); Edward Murray, *The Cinematic Imagination* (New York, 1972).

5. George Bluestone, *Novels into Film* (Berkeley, 1961), p. 63.

6. Christian Metz, *Langage et cinéma* (Paris, 1971), pp. 20–21.

7. Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form,* trans. Jay Leyda (New York, 1957), p. 233.

8. Metz, *Langage et cinéma,* p. 24.

9. Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (New York, 1961), pp. 242–43.

10. Reported by the director of the Denver Art Association in 1922 and quoted in George William Eggers's foreword to Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Pictures* (New York, 1922), p. xiv.

11. "Space and Time," in H. A. Lorentz et al., *The Principle of Relativity,* trans. W. Perrett and G. B. Jeffery (London, 1923), p. 75.

12. "The Apparatus," trans. Jean Andrews and Bertrand Augst, *Camera Obscura, A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory* 1 (Fall 1976): 104–26.

13. Cf. Jean-Louis Comolli, "Technique and Ideology: Camera, Perspective, Depth of Field," trans. Diana Matias, *Film Reader* 2 (Jan. 1977): 128–40.

14. Because of the awkwardness of the joint pronouns *he/she, his/her,* I have used *he* and *his* throughout the text. The reader should, however, understand that the feminine pronoun is included in this generalized usage of *he, his,* etc.

15. "His startling series of compositions of women in the bath, *modistes* and *blanchisseuses,* is the best school in which to acquire training in ideas about space composition within the limits of a frame." Eisenstein, "The Dynamic Square" (1930), in *Film Essays,* ed. Jay Leyda (New York, 1970), p. 56.

16. Jean Mitry, discussing point of view in the very first Lumière clips, claims that "*from the very first days, the narrow frame of scenic representation was shattered.* Space had replaced the stage" (Mitry's emphasis). *Histoire du cinéma* (Paris, 1967), 1:113.

17. See ibid., p. 30. Analysis of this parallel between the camera lens and the Renaissance postulation of an ideal viewing-field has led to provocative controversies over the history of perceptual coding and the ideological thrust of such coding. See, in particular, J.-P. Oudart, "L'Effet de réel," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 228 (Mar.–Apr. 1971), J.-L. Comolli, "Technique and Ideology," *Film Reader* 2 (Winter 1977), and Stephen Heath, "On Screen, In Frame: Film and Ideology," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 1, no. 3 (Aug. 1976).

18. The relationship between the movies and cubism, coterminous developments linked in the present discussion through the figure of Cézanne, requires a whole study in itself. Some valuable remarks along this line have been made by Elie Faure, *Fonction du cinéma* (Paris, 1964), esp. pp. 52–53, and Francastel, *Art et technique* (Paris, 1964), pp. 164–65.

19. "Esquisse d'une psychologie du cinéma," in L'Herbier, ed., *Intelligence du ci-*

nématographe, p. 375; orig. in *Verve* (1941) and later in book form (Paris: Gallimard, 1946).

20. Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," *Sewanee Review* 53 (1945): 646–47.

The "impression of reality," so much expounded by film theoreticians, is based, first, on the resemblance of the film images to the events filmed, but also on the high degree of participation that this resemblance encourages. Cf. Christian Metz, "A propos de 'l'impression de réalité' au cinéma," in *Essais sur la signification au cinéma* (Paris, 1968), 1:13–24.

J.-P. Oudart, taking off from Foucault's commentary on the inclusion of the spectator in Velasquez's *Las Meninas* (*Les Mots et les choses,* ch. 1), shows that an essential factor in the production of "l'effet de réel" since the Renaissance has been the perceiving subject's *inscription* in the pictorial or, in the case of the novel and cinema, the narrative frame of reference. "L'Effet de réel," 19–26.

21. Edgar Morin, *Le Cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire* (Paris: Gonthier, 1958), p. 99; Rudolf Arnheim, *Film as Art* (Berkeley, 1957), pp. 58–59; Lindsay, *Art of the Moving Picture,* p. 84; Mitry, *Histoire,* 1:227. Cf. also Lewis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film* (New York, 1939), p. 103, and Béla Balázs, *Theory of the Film* (London, 1952), pp. 34–35.

22. Hassan El Nouty, "Littérature et pré-cinema au XIXe siècle," *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises* 20 (May 1968), 197.

23. Mitry, *Histoire,* 1:30–31, 24–25.

24. "Our ideas do, whilst we are awake, succeed one another in our minds at certain distances, not much unlike the images in the inside of a lantern, turned round by the heat of a candle." John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* bk. 2, ch. 14, p. 9.

25. *Le Cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire,* p. 16.

26. Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command* (New York, 1948), p. 14.

27. Yvon Belaval, "Une Drôle de pensée de Leibniz," *Nouvelle Revue Française* (1959), pp. 757, 759. See descriptions by Descartes of universal applications of the machine, by which men would become "masters and possessors of nature," in Alexandre Koyré, "Les Philosophes et la machine," *Critique* 4, nos. 23–26 (1948). This article is excellent, besides, for all the background on scientific theory and technology merely skimmed over here.

28. Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command,* pp. 18ff.

29. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York, 1964), p. 197.

30. Francastel, *Art et technique,* p. 211.

31. Early films, as I suggested in the Introduction, also took on certain traits of the traditional novel, especially in the realms of morality and sentimentalism. The most obvious carry-overs from literature, such as a title reading "Meanwhile . . . ," demonstrate, on the one hand, a slightly delayed action in the cinema's becoming fully aware of its own potentials and, on the other hand, the contemporary difficulty of separating narrative from its specifically literary ties.

32. Cf. Robert Scholes's notion of "narrativity," more or less similar to what I have been referring to as spectator participation, in "Narration and Narrativity in Film," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 1, no. 3 (1976): 283–96.

33. "Eisenstein's Subversive Adaptation," in *The Classic American Novel and the Movies,* ed. Peary and Shatzkin (New York, 1977), esp. pp. 255–56.

34. By "classic" modern novel, I mean, historically, the novel of the 1910s and 1920s in Europe and America. The form of this novel, as is generally agreed today, although posited on an aesthetic of radical experimentation, can be spoken of as fully evolved.

As a result, we can sketch the technical parameters of the classic modern, very much in the manner that Barthes sketches those of the classic nineteenth-century novel or Metz those of the classic Hollywood film, by restricting the field of reference to a set number of conventions, codes, or fields of activity. The contention here and in the next section will be that the technical capacities of the classic modern novel take on sharpest definition when considered against the backdrop of cinematic innovation.

35. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art* (New York, 1951) 4:244.

36. "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," 230ff.

37. *Time in Literature* (Berkeley, 1955), pp. 35–37.

38. Méliès, excerpt from *Les Vues cinématographiques* (1907), in L'Herbier, ed., *L'Intelligence du cinématographe,* p. 186. Morin discusses the event in *Le Cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire,* pp. 48–49.

39. Cf. Malraux, "Esquisse d'une psychologie du cinéma; orig. in *Verve,* 1941.

40. J. Epstein, quoted in Morin, p. 54, where Lumière's *Charcuterie* is also mentioned.

41. See A. Einstein, "On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies," in *The Principle of Relativity,* trans. W. Perrett and G. B. Jeffery (London, 1923), pp. 40–43. Einstein's definition of the "'time' of an event," for which he posits two synchronous clocks, one at the place of the event and one at another place, depends on the concept of simultaneity, or the codetermination of time and space; this concept, however, has "*absolute* signification" only with reference to a single "stationary system."

42. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Bibliotheque de la Pléiade, 1954) III: 882–83.

33

André Bazin

In Defense of Mixed Cinema

A BACKWARD GLANCE OVER the films of the past 10 or 15 years quickly reveals that one of the dominant features of their evolution is the increasingly significant extent to which they have gone for their material to the heritage of literature and the stage.

Certainly it is not only just now that the cinema is beginning to look to the novel and the play for its material. But its present approach is different. The adaptation of *Monte Cristo, Les Misérables,* or *Les Trois Mousquetaires* is not in the same category as that of *Symphonie pastorale, Jacques le fataliste, Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne, Le Diable au corps,* or *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne.* Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo simply serve to supply the film-maker with characters and adventures largely independent of their literary framework. Javert or D'Artagnan have become part of a mythology existing outside of the novels. They enjoy in some measure an autonomous existence of which the original works are no longer anything more than an accidental and almost superfluous manifestation. On the other hand, film-makers continue to adapt novels that are sometimes first-rate as novels but which they feel justified in treating simply as very detailed film synopses. Film-makers likewise go to novelists for character, a plot, even—and this is a further stage—for atmosphere, as for example from Simenon, or the poetic atmosphere found in Pierre Véry. But here again, one can ignore the fact that it is a book and just consider the writer a particularly prolix scenarist. This is so true that a great number of American crime novels are clearly written with a double purpose in view, namely with an eye on a Hollywood adaptation. Furthermore, respect for crime fiction when it shows any measure of originality is becoming more and more the rule; liberties cannot be taken with the author's text with an easy conscience. But when Robert Bresson says, before making *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* into a film, that he is going to follow the book page by page, even phrase by phrase, it is clearly a question of something quite different and new values are involved. The cinéaste is no longer content, as were Corneille, La Fontaine or Molière before him, to ransack other works. His method is to bring to the screen virtually unaltered any work the excellence of which he decides on a priori. And how can it be otherwise when this work derives from a form of literature so highly developed that the heroes and the meaning of their actions depend very closely on the style of the author, when they are intimately wrapped up with it as in a microcosm, the laws of which, in themselves rigorously determined, have no validity outside

that world, when the novel has renounced its epic-like simplicity so that it is no longer a matrix of myths but rather a locus of subtle interactions between style, psychology, morals, or metaphysics.

In the theater the direction of this evolution is more evident still. Dramatic literature, like the novel, has always allowed itself to suffer violence at the hands of the cinema. But who would dare to compare Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* to the, in retrospect, ludicrous borrowings that the *film d'art* made once upon a time from the repertoire of the Comédie Française? It has always been a temptation to the film-maker to film theater since it is already a spectacle; but we know what comes of it. And it is with good reason that the term "filmed theater" has become a commonplace of critical opprobrium. The novel at least calls for some measure of creativity, in its transition from page to screen. The theater by contrast is a false friend; its illusory likeness to the cinema set the latter en route to a dead end, luring it onto the slippery slope of the merely facile. If the dramatic repertory of the boulevards, however, has occasionally been the source of a goodish film, that is only because the director has taken the same kind of liberty with the play as he would with a novel, retaining in fact only the characters and the plot. But there again, the phenomenon is radically new and this seems to imply respect for the theatrical character of the model as an inviolable principle.

The films we have just referred to and others the titles of which will undoubtedly be cited shortly, are both too numerous and of too high a quality to be taken as exceptions that prove the rule. On the contrary, works of this kind have for the last 10 years signposted the way for one of the most fruitful trends of contemporary cinema.

"*Ça, c'est du cinéma!*" "That's really cinema!" Georges Altmann long ago proclaimed from the cover of a book dedicated to the glorification of the silent film, from *The Pilgrim* to *The General Line.* Are the dogmas and hopes of the earliest film criticism that fought for the autonomy of the Seventh Art now to be discarded like an old hat? Is the cinema or what remains of it incapable of surviving without the twin crutches of literature and theater? Is it in process of becoming an art derived from and dependent on one of the traditional arts?

The question proposed for our consideration is not so new; first of all, it is the problem of the reciprocal influence of the arts and of adaptations in general. If the cinema were two or three thousand years old we would undoubtedly see more clearly that it does not lie outside the common laws of the evolution of the arts. But cinema is only sixty years old and already its historical perspectives are prodigiously blurred. What ordinarily extends through one or two civilizations is here contained within the life span of a single man.

Nor is this the principal cause of error, because this accelerated evolution is in no sense contemporary with that of the other arts. The cinema is young, but literature, theater, and music are as old as history. Just as the education of a child derives from imitating the adults around him, so the evolution of the cinema has been influenced by the example of the hallowed arts. Thus its history, from the beginning of the century on, is the result of determinants specific to the evolution of all art, and likewise of effects on it of the arts that have already evolved. Again, the confused pattern of this aesthetic complex is

aggravated by certain sociological factors. The cinema, in fact, has come to the fore as the only popular art at a time when the theater, the social art *par excellence,* reaches only a privileged cultural or monied minority. It may be that the past 20 years of the cinema will be reckoned in its overall history as the equivalent of five centuries in literature. It is not a long history for an art, but it is for our critical sense. So let us try and narrow the field of these reflections.

First of all let it be said that adaptations which the modern critic looks upon as a shameful way out are an established feature of the history of art. Malraux has pointed out how much the painting of the Renaissance was originally indebted to Gothic sculpture. Giotto painted in full relief. Michelangelo deliberately refused any assistance he might have had from oils, the fresco being more suitable to a style of painting based on sculpture. And doubtless this was a stage quickly passed through on the way to the liberation of "pure painting." But would you therefore say that Giotto is inferior to Rembrandt? And what is the value of such a hierarchy? Can anyone deny that fresco in full relief was a necessary stage in the process of development and hence aesthetically justified? What again does one say about Byzantine miniatures in stone enlarged to the dimensions of a cathedral tympanum? And to turn now to the field of the novel, should one censure preclassical tragedy for adapting the pastoral novel for the stage or Madame La Fayette for her indebtedness to Racinian dramaturgy? Again, what is true technically is even truer of themes which turn up in all kinds and varieties of expression. This is a commonplace of literary history up to the eighteenth century, when the notion of plagiarism appeared for the first time. In the Middle Ages, the great Christian themes are to be found alike in theater, painting, stained-glass windows, and so on.

Doubtless what misleads us about the cinema is that, in contrast to what usually happens in the evolutionary cycle of an art, adaptation, borrowing, and imitation do not appear in the early stages. On the contrary, the autonomy of the means of expression, and the originality of subject matter, have never been greater than they were in the first twenty or thirty years of the cinema. One would expect a nascent art to try to imitate its elders and then, bit by bit, to work out its own laws and select its rightful themes. One finds it less easy to understand that it should place an increased volume of experience at the service of material foreign to its genius, as if its capacity for invention was in inverse proportion to its powers of expression. From there to the position that this paradoxical evolution is a form of decadence is but a step, and one that criticism did not hesitate to take upon the advent of sound.

But this was to misunderstand the basic facts of the history of film. The fact that the cinema appeared after the novel and the theater does not mean that it falls into line behind them and on the same plane. Cinema developed under sociological conditions very different from those in which the traditional arts exist. You might as well derive the *bal-musette* or bebop from classical choreography. The first film-makers effectively extracted what was of use to them from the art with which they were about to win their public, namely the circus, the provincial theater, and the music hall, which provided slapstick films, especially, with both technique and actors. Everyone is familiar with the saying attributed to Zecca when he discovered a certain Shakespeare: "What

a lot of good stuff that character passed up!" Zecca and his fellows were in no danger of being influenced by a literature that neither they nor their audience read. On the other hand they were greatly influenced by the popular literature of the time, to which we owe the sublime *Fantômas,* one of the masterpieces of the screen. The film gave a new life to the conditions out of which came an authentic and great popular art. It did not spurn the humbler and despised forms of the theater, of the fairground, or of the penny dreadful. True, the fine gentlemen of the Academy and of the Comédie Française did make an effort to adopt this child that had been brought up in the profession of its parents, but the failure of their efforts only emphasized the futility of this unnatural enterprise. The misfortune of *Oedipus* and *Hamlet* meant about as much to the cinema in its early days as "our ancestors the Gauls" do to Negro elementary school children in the African bush. Any interest or charm that these early films have for us is on a par with those pagan and naive interpretations practiced by savage tribes that have gobbled up their missionaries. If the obvious borrowings in France—Hollywood unashamedly pillaged the techniques and personnel of the Anglo-Saxon music hall—from what survived of the popular theater, of the fairgrounds, or the boulevard, did not create aesthetic disputes, it was primarily because as yet there was no film criticism properly so called. It was likewise because such reincarnations by these so-called inferior arts did not shock anybody. No one felt any call to defend them except the interested parties who had more knowledge of their trade than they had of filmological preconceptions.

When the cinema actually began to follow in the footsteps of the theater, a link was restored, after a century or two of evolution, with dramatic forms that had been virtually abandoned. Did those same learned historians who know everything there is to be known about farce in the sixteenth century ever make it their business to find out what a resurgence of vitality it had between 1910 and 1914 at the Pathé and Gaumont Studios and under the baton of Mack Sennett?

It would be equally easy to demonstrate that the same process occurred in the case of the novel. The serial film adopting the popular technique of the feuilleton revived the old forms of the *conte.* I experienced this personally when seeing once again Feuillade's *Vampires* at one of those gatherings which my friend Henri Langlois, the director of the Cinémathèque Française, knows how to organize so well. That night only one of the two projectors was working. In addition, the print had no subtitles and I imagine that Feuillade himself would have had difficulty in trying to recognize the murderers. It was even money as to which were the good guys and which the bad. So difficult was it to tell who was which that the apparent villains of one reel turned out to be the victims in the next. The fact that the lights were turned on every ten minutes to change reels seemed to multiply the episodes. Seen under these conditions, Feuillade's *chef d'oeuvre* reveals the aesthetic principle that lies behind its charm. Every interruption evoked an "ah" of disappointment and every fresh start a sigh of hope for a solution. This story, the meaning of which was a complete mystery to the audience, held its attention and carried it along purely and simply by the tension created in the telling. There was no question

of preexisting action broken up by intervals, but of a piece unduly interrupted, an inexhaustible spring, the flow of which was blocked by a mysterious hand. Hence the unbearable tension set up by the next episode to follow and the anxious wait, not so much for the events to come as for the continuation of the telling, of the restarting of an interrupted act of creation. Feuillade himself proceeded in the same way in making his films. He had no idea what would happen next and filmed step by step as the morning's inspiration came. Both the author and the spectator were in the same situation, namely, that of the King and Scheherazade; the repeated intervals of darkness in the cinema paralleled the separating off of the Thousand and One Nights. The "to be continued" of the true feuilleton as of the old serial films is not just a device extrinsic to the story. If Scheherazade had told everything at one sitting, the King, cruel as any film audience, would have had her executed at dawn. Both storyteller and film want to test the power of their magic by way of interruption, to know the teasing sense of waiting for the continuation of a tale that is a substitute for everyday living which, in its turn, is but a break in the continuity of a dream. So we see that the so-called original purity of the primitive screen does not stand up under examination. The sound film does not mark the threshold of a lost paradise on the other side of which the muse of the seventh art, discovering her nakedness, would then start to put back the rags of which she had been stripped. The cinema has not escaped a universal law. It has obeyed it in its own way—the only way possible, in view of the combination of technical and sociological circumstances affecting it.

We know of course that it is not enough to have proved that the greater part of the early films were only either borrowed or pillaged in order to justify thereby the actual form of that adaptation. Deprived of his usual stand the champion of pure cinema could still argue that intercourse between the arts is easier at the primitive level. It may very well be that farce is indebted to the cinema for its rejuvenation. But its effectiveness was primarily visual and it is by way of farce, first of all, and then of the music hall, that the old traditions of mime have been preserved. The farther one penetrates into the history of types, the more the differences become clear, just as in the evolution of animals at the extremities of the branches deriving from a common source. The original polyvalence having developed its potential, these are henceforth bound up with subtleties and complexities of form such that to attack them is to compromise the whole work itself. Under the direct influence of architectural sculpture Raphael and Da Vinci were already attacking Michelangelo for making painting a radically autonomous art.

There is some doubt that this objection could stand up under a detailed discussion, and that evolved forms do not continue to act on one another, but it is true that the history of art goes on developing in the direction of autonomy and specificity. The concept of pure art—pure poetry, pure painting, and so on—is not entirely without meaning; but it refers to an aesthetic reality as difficult to define as it is to combat. In any case, even if a certain mixing of the arts remains possible, like the mixing of genres, it does not necessarily follow that they are all fortunate mixtures. There are fruitful cross-breedings which add to the qualities derived from the parents; there are attractive but barren

hybrids and there are likewise hideous combinations that bring forth nothing but chimeras. So let us stop appealing to precedents drawn from the origin of the cinema and let us take up again the problem as it seems to confront us today.

While critics are apt to view with regret the borrowings made by cinema from literature, the existence of a reverse process is as accepted as it is undeniable. It is in fact commonly agreed that the novel, and particularly the American novel, has come under the influence of the cinema. Let us leave to one side books in which the influence or direct borrowings are deliberate and so of little use for our purpose, as for example *Loin de Reuil* by Raymond Queneau. The question is whether or not the art of Dos Passos, Caldwell, Hemingway, or Malraux derives from the technique of the cinema. To tell the truth, we do not believe it for a moment. Undoubtedly, and how could it be otherwise, the new way of seeing things provided by the screen—seeing things in close-up or by way of story-telling forms such as montage—has helped the novelist to refurbish his technical equipment. But even where the relationship to cinematic techniques is avowed, they can at the same time be challenged: they are simply an addition to the apparatus available to the writer for use in the process of building his own particular world. Even if one admits that the novel has been somewhat shaped by the aesthetic gravitational pull of the cinema, this influence of a new art has unquestionably not been greater than that of the theater on literature during the last century. The influence of a dominant neighbor on the other arts is probably a constant law. Certainly, the work of Graham Greene seems to offer undeniable proof of this. But a closer look reveals that his so-called film techniques—we must not forget that he was a film critic for a number of years—are actually never used in the cinema. So marked is this that one is constantly asking oneself as one "visualizes" the author's style why film-makers continue to deprive themselves of a technique that could be so useful to them. The originality of a film such as *L'Espoir* by Malraux lies in its capacity to show us what the cinema would be if it took its inspiration from the novels "influenced" by the cinema. What should we conclude from this? Surely that we should rather reverse the usual theory and study the influence of modern literature on film-makers.

What do we actually mean by "cinema" in our present context? If we mean a mode of expression by means of realistic representation, by a simple registering of images, simply an outer seeing as opposed to the use of the resources of introspection or of analysis in the style of the classical novel, then it must be pointed out that the English novelists had already discovered in behaviorism the psychological justifications of such a technique. But here the literary critic is guilty of imprudently prejudging the true nature of cinema, based on a very superficial definition of what is here meant by reality. Because its basic material is photography it does not follow that the seventh art is of its nature dedicated to the dialectic of appearances and the psychology of behavior. While it is true that it relies entirely on the outside world for its objects it has a thousand ways of acting on the appearance of an object so as to eliminate any equivocation and to make of this outward sign one and only one inner reality. The truth is that the vast majority of images on the screen conform to

the psychology of the theater or to the novel of classical analysis. They proceed from the commonsense supposition that a necessary and unambiguous causal relationship exists between feelings and their outward manifestations. They postulate that all is in the consciousness and that this consciousness can be known.

If, a little more subtly, one understands by cinema the techniques of a narrative born of montage and change of camera position, the same statement holds true. A novel by Dos Passos or Malraux is no less different from those films to which we are accustomed than it is from a novel by Fromontan or Paul Bourget. Actually, the American novel belongs not so much to the age of cinema as to a certain vision of the world, a vision influenced doubtless by man's relations with a technical civilization, but whose influence upon the cinema, which is a fruit of this civilization, has been less than on the novel, in spite of the alibis that the film-maker can offer the novelist.

Likewise, in going to the novel the cinema has usually looked not as one might expect to works in which some have seen its influence already operating, but, in Hollywood, to Victorian literature and in France, to Henri Bordeaux and Pierre Benoît. Better . . . or worse . . . when an American director turns his attention on some rare occasion to a work by Hemingway, for example *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* he treats it in the traditional style that suits each and every adventure story.

The way things are, then, it would seem as if the cinema was fifty years behind the novel. If we maintain that the cinema influences the novel then we must suppose that it is a question of a potential image, existing exclusively behind the magnifying glass of the critic and seen only from where he sits. We would then be talking about the influence of a nonexistent cinema, an ideal cinema, a cinema that the novelist would produce if he were a film-maker; of an imaginary art that we are still awaiting.

And, God knows, this hypothesis is not as silly as it sounds. Let us hold on to it, at least as we do to those imaginary values which cancel one another out following on the equation that they have helped to solve.

If the apparent influence of the cinema on the novel has led the minds of some otherwise sound critics astray, it is because the novelist now uses narrative techniques and adopts a standard of evaluation of the facts, the affinity of which with the ways of the cinema are undoubted, whether borrowed directly, or as we prefer to think, of a certain aesthetic convergence that has simultaneously polarized several contemporary forms of expression. But in this process of influences or of resemblances, it is the novel which has proceeded most logically along the pathways of style. The novel it is that has made the subtlest use of montage, for example, and of the reversal of chronology. Above all it is the novel that has discovered the way to raise to the level of an authentic metaphysical significance an almost mirror-like objectivity. What camera has ever been as externally related to its object as the consciousness of the hero of Albert Camus' *L'Etranger*? The fact of the matter is that we do not know if *Manhattan Transfer* or *La Condition humaine* would have been very different without the cinema, but we are certain on the contrary that *Thomas Garner* and *Citizen Kane* would never have existed if it had not been for James Joyce

and Dos Passos. We are witnessing, at the point at which the avant-garde has now arrived, the making of films that dare to take their inspiration from a novel-like style one might describe as ultracinematographic. Seen from this angle the question of borrowing is only of secondary importance. The majority of the films that we have presently in mind are not adaptations from novels yet certain episodes of *Paisà* are much more indebted to Hemingway (the scenes in the marshes), or to Saroyan (Naples) than Sam Wood's *For Whom The Bell Tolls* is to the original. By contrast, Malraux's film is the close equivalent of certain episodes in *L'Espoir* and the best of the recent English films are adaptations of Graham Greene. In our view the most satisfactory is the modestly made *Brighton Rock,* which passed almost unnoticed while John Ford was lost in the sumptuous falsification of *The Power and the Glory.* Let us try therefore and see what the best contemporary films owe to the contemporary novelists—something it would be easy to demonstrate up to the appearance especially of *Ladri di Biciclette.* So, far from being scandalized by adaptations, we shall see in them, if not alas a certain augury for the progress of cinema, at least a possible factor in this progress, to the extent, at least, that the novelist transforms it. Perhaps you may say that this is all very true about modern novels, if the cinema is simply recouping here a hundredfold what it has already lent to the novel, but what is the argument worth when the film-maker pretends he is taking his inspiration from Gide or Stendhal? And why not from Proust or even from Madame de La Fayette?

And indeed why not? Jacques Bourgeois in an article in *La Revue du Cinéma* has made a brilliant analysis of the affinities between *A La Recherche du temps perdu* and cinematic forms of expression. Actually, the real problems to be faced in discussing the theories of such adaptations do not belong to the realm of aesthetics. They do not derive from the cinema as an art form but as a sociological and industrial fact. The drama of adaptation is the drama of popularization. A provincial publicity blurb on *La Chartreuse de Parme* described it as taken from "the famous cloak-and-dagger novel." We sometimes get the truth from film salesmen who have never read Stendhal. Shall we therefore condemn the film by Christian Jacque? Yes, to the extent that he has been false to the essence of the novel and wherever we feel that this betrayal was not inevitable. No, if we take into consideration first of all that this adaptation is above the average film level in quality and secondly that, all things considered, it provides an enchanting introduction to Stendhal's work and has certainly increased the number of its readers. It is nonsense to wax wroth about the indignities practiced on literary works on the screen, at least in the name of literature. After all, they cannot harm the original in the eyes of those who know it, however little they approximate to it. As for those who are unacquainted with the original, one of two things may happen; either they will be satisfied with the film which is as good as most, or they will want to know the original, with the resulting gain for literature. This argument is supported by publishers' statistics that show a rise in the sale of literary works after they have been adapted to the screen. No, the truth is, that culture in general and literature in particular have nothing to lose from such an enterprise.

There now remains the cinema, and I personally feel that there is every

reason to be concerned over the way it is too often used in relation to our literary capital because the film-maker has everything to gain from fidelity. Already much more highly developed, and catering to a relatively cultured and exacting public, the novel offers the cinema characters that are much more complex and, again, as regards the relation of form and content, a firmness of treatment and a subtlety to which we are not accustomed on the screen. Obviously if the material on which the scenarist and the director are working is in itself on an intellectual level higher than that usual in the cinema then two things can be done. Either this difference in level and the artistic prestige of the original work serves as a guarantee, a reservoir of ideas and a *cachet* for the film, as is the case with *Carmen, La Chartreuse de Parme,* or *L'Idiot,* or the film-makers honestly attempt an integral equivalent, they try at least not simply to use the book as an inspiration, not merely to adapt it, but to translate it onto the screen as instanced in *La Symphonie pastorale, Le Diable au corps, Les Premières Désillusions,* or *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne.* Let us not throw stones at the image-makers who simplify in adapting. Their betrayal as we have said is a relative thing and there is no loss to literature. But the hopes for the future of the cinema are obviously pinned to the second group. When one opens the sluice the level of the water is very little higher than that of the canal. When someone makes a film of *Madame Bovary* in Hollywood, the difference of aesthetic level between the work of Flaubert and the average American film being so great, the result is a standard American production that has only one thing wrong with it—that it is still called *Madame Bovary.* And how can it be otherwise when the literary work is brought face to face with the vast and powerful cinematographic industry: cinema is the great leveler. When, on the other hand, thanks to a happy combination of circumstances, the film-maker plans to treat the book as something different from a run-of-the-mill scenario, it is a little as if, in that moment, the whole of cinema is raised to the level of literature. This is the case with the *Madame Bovary* and *Une Partie de campagne* of Jean Renoir. Actually, these are not too very good examples, not because of the quality of the films but precisely because Renoir is more faithful to the spirit than the letter. What strikes us about the fidelity of Renoir is that paradoxically it is compatible with complete independence from the original. The justification for this is of course that the genius of Renoir is certainly as great as that of Flaubert or Maupassant. The phenomenon we face here is comparable then to the translation of Edgar Allan Poe by Flaubert.

Certainly it would be better if all directors were men of genius; presumably then there would be no problem of adaptation. The critic is only too fortunate if he is confronted merely with men of talent. This is enough however on which to establish our thesis. There is nothing to prevent us from dreaming of a *Diable au corps* directed by Jean Vigo but let us congratulate ourselves that at least we have an adaptation by Claude Autant-Lara. Faithfulness to the work of Radiguet has not only forced the screenwriters to offer us interesting and relatively complex characters, it has incited them to flout some of the moral conventions of the cinema, to take certain risks—prudently calculated, but who can blame them for this—with public prejudices. It has widened the intellectual and moral horizons of the audience and prepared the way

for other films of quality. What is more, this is not all; and it is wrong to present fidelity as if it were necessarily a negative enslavement to an alien aesthetic. Undoubtedly the novel has means of its own—language not the image is its material, its intimate effect on the isolated reader is not the same as that of a film on the crowd in a darkened cinema—but precisely for these reasons the differences in aesthetic structure make the search for equivalents an even more delicate matter, and thus they require all the more power of invention and imagination from the film-maker who is truly attempting a resemblance. One might suggest that in the realm of language and style cinematic creation is in direct ratio to fidelity. For the same reasons that render a word-by-word translation worthless and a too free translation a matter for condemnation, a good adaptation should result in a restoration of the essence of the letter and the spirit. But one knows how intimate a possession of a language and of the genius proper to it is required for a good translation. For example, taking the well-known simple past tenses of André Gide as being specifically a literary effect of a style, one might consider them subtleties that can never be translated into the cinema. Yet it is not at all certain that Delannoy in his *Symphonie pastorale* has not found the equivalent. The ever-present snow carries with it a subtle and polyvalent symbolism that quietly modifies the action, and provides it as it were with a permanent moral coefficient the value of which is not so different after all from that which the writer was searching for by the appropriate use of tenses. Yet, the idea of surrounding this spiritual adventure with snow and of ignoring systematically the summery aspect of the countryside is a truly cinematographic discovery, to which the director may have been led by a fortunate understanding of the text. The example of Bresson in *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* is even more convincing; his adaptation reaches an almost dizzy height of fidelity by way of a ceaselessly created respect for the text. Alfred Beguin has rightly remarked that the violence characteristic of Bernanos could never have the same force in literature and cinema. The screen uses violence in such a customary fashion that it seems somehow like a devalued currency, which is at one and the same time provoking and conventional. Genuine fidelity to the tone set by the novelist calls thus for a kind of conversion of the violence of the text. The real equivalent of the hyperbole of Bernanos lay in the ellipsis and litotes of Robert Bresson's editing. The more important and decisive the literary qualities of the work, the more the adaptation disturbs its equilibrium, the more it needs a creative talent to reconstruct it on a new equilibrium not indeed identical with, but the equivalent of, the old one. To pretend that the adaptation of novels is a slothful exercise from which the true cinema, "pure cinema," can have nothing to gain, is critical nonsense to which all adaptations of quality give the lie. It is those who care the least for fidelity in the name of the so-called demands of the screen who betray at one and the same time both literature and the cinema.

The effective fidelity of a Cocteau or Wyler is not evidence of a backward step, on the contrary, it is evidence of a development of cinematographic intelligence. Whether it is, as with the author of *Les Parents terribles,* the astonishingly perspicacious mobility of the camera or, as with Wyler, the asceticism of his editing, the refining down of the photography, the use of the fixed cam-

era and of deep focus, their success is the result of outstanding mastery; moreover it is evidence of an inventiveness of expression which is the exact opposite of a passive recording of theater. To show respect for the theater it is not enough to photograph it. To create theater of any worthwhile kind is more difficult than to create cinema and this is what the majority of adapters were trying to do up to now.

There is a hundred times more cinema, and better cinema at that, in one fixed shot in *The Little Foxes* or *Macbeth* than in all the exterior traveling shots, in all the natural settings, in all the geographical exoticism, in all the shots of the reverse side of the set, by means of which up to now the screen has ingeniously attempted to make us forget the stage. Far from being a sign of decadence, the mastering of the theatrical repertoire by the cinema is on the contrary a proof of maturity. In short, to adapt is no longer to betray but to respect. Let us take a comparison from circumstances in the material order. In order to attain this high level of aesthetic fidelity, it is essential that the cinematographic form of expression make progress comparable to that in the field of optics. The distance separating *Hamlet* from the *film d'art* is as great as that separating the complexities of the modern lens from the primitive condenser of the magic lantern. Its imposing complexity has no other purpose than to compensate for the distortions, the aberrations, the diffractions, for which the glass is responsible—that is to say, to render the *camera obscura* as objective as possible. The transition from a theatrical work to the screen demands, on the aesthetic level, a scientific knowledge, so to speak, of fidelity comparable to that of a camera operator in his photographic rendering. It is the termination of a progression and the beginning of a rebirth. If the cinema today is capable of effectively taking on the realm of the novel and the theater, it is primarily because it is sure enough of itself and master enough of its means so that it no longer need assert itself in the process. That is to say it can now aspire to fidelity—not the illusory fidelity of a replica—through an intimate understanding of its own true aesthetic structure which is a prerequisite and necessary condition of respect for the works it is about to make its own. The multiplication of adaptations of literary works which are far from cinematic need not disturb the critic who is concerned about the purity of the seventh art; on the contrary, they are the guarantee of its progress.

"Why then," it will be asked by those nostalgic for cinema with a capital C, independent, specific, autonomous, free of all compromise, "should so much art be placed at the service of a cause that does not need it—why make unauthentic copies of novels when one can read the book, and of *Phèdre* when all you need is to go to the Comédie Française? No matter how satisfying the adaptations may be, you cannot argue that they are worth more than the original, especially not of a film of an equal artistic quality on a theme that is specifically cinematographic? You cite *Le Diable au corps, Les Premières Désillusions, Les Parents terribles, Hamlet.* Well and good. I cite in return *The Gold Rush, Potemkin, Broken Blossoms, Scarface, Stagecoach,* or even *Citizen Kane,* all masterpieces which would never have existed without the cinema, irreplaceable additions to the patrimony of art. Even if the best of adaptations are no longer naïve betrayals or an unworthy prostitution, it is still true that in them

a great deal of talent has gone to waste. You speak of progress but progress which can only render the cinema sterile in making it an annex of literature. Give to the theater and to the novel that which is theirs and to the cinema that which can never belong elsewhere."

This last objection would be valid in theory if it did not overlook historical relativity, a factor to be counted when an art is in full evolution. It is quite true that an original scenario is preferable to an adaptation, all else being equal. No one dreams of contesting this. You may call Charlie Chaplin the Molière of the cinema, but we would not sacrifice *Monsieur Verdoux* for an adaptation of *Le Misanthrope.* Let us hope, then, to have as often as possible films like *Le Jour se lève, La Règle du jeu,* or *The Best Years of Our Lives.* But these are platonic wishes, attitudes of mind that have no bearing on the actual evolution of the cinema. If the cinema turns more and more to literature—indeed to painting or to drama—it is a fact which we take note of and attempt to understand because it is very likely that we cannot influence it. In such a situation, if fact does not absolutely make right, it requires the critic at least to be favorably predisposed. Once more, let us not be misled here by drawing an analogy with the other arts, especially those whose evolution towards an individualistic use has made virtually independent of the consumer. Lautréamont and Van Gogh produced their creative work while either misunderstood or ignored by their contemporaries. The cinema cannot exist without a minimum number, and it is an immense minimum, of people who frequent the cinema here and now. Even when the film-maker affronts the public taste there is no justification for his audacity, no justification except insofar as it is possible to admit that it is the spectator who misunderstands what he should and someday will like. The only possible contemporary comparison is with architecture, since a house has no meaning except as a habitation. The cinema is likewise a functional art. If we take another system of reference we must say of the cinema that its existence precedes its essence; even in his most adventurous extrapolations, it is this existence from which the critic must take his point of departure. As in history, and with approximately the same reservations, the verification of a change goes beyond reality and already postulates a value judgment. Those who damned the sound film at its birth were unwilling to admit precisely this, even when the sound film held the incomparable advantage over the silent film that it was replacing it.

Even if this critical pragmatism does not seem to the reader sufficiently well-founded, he must nevertheless admit that it justifies in us a certain humility and thoughtful prudence when faced with any sign of evolution in the cinema. It is in this frame of mind that we offer the explanation with which we would like to end this essay. The masterpieces to which we customarily refer as examples of true cinema—the cinema which owes nothing to the theater and literature because it is capable of discovering its own themes and language—these masterpieces are probably as admirable as they are inimitable. If the Soviet cinema no longer gives us the equivalent of *Potemkin* or Hollywood the equivalent of *Sunrise, Hallelujah, Scarface, It Happened Last Night,* or even of *Stagecoach* it is not because the new generation of directors is in any way inferior to the old. As a matter of fact, they are very largely the same

people. Nor is it, we believe, because economic and political factors of production have rendered their inspiration sterile. It is rather that genius and talent are relative phenomena and only develop in relation to a set of historical circumstances. It would be too simple to explain the theatrical failures of Voltaire on the grounds that he had no tragic sense; it was the age that had none. Any attempt to prolong Racinian tragedy was an incongruous undertaking in conflict with the nature of things. There is no sense in asking ourselves what the author of *Phèdre* would have written in 1740 because he whom we call Racine was not a man answering that identity, but "the-poet-who-had-written-*Phèdre*." Without *Phèdre* Racine is an anonymity, a concept of the mind. It is equally pointless in the cinema to regret that we no longer have Mack Sennett to carry on the great comic tradition. The genius of Mack Sennett was that he made his slapstick comedies at the period when this was possible. As a matter of fact, the quality of Mack Sennett productions died before he did, and certain of his pupils are still very much alive; Harold Lloyd and Buster Keaton, for example, whose rare appearances these past fifteen years have been only painful exhibitions in which nothing of the verve of yesteryear has survived. Only Chaplin has known how to span a third of a century of cinema, and this because his genius was truly exceptional. But at the price of what reincarnations, of what a total renewal of his inspiration, of his style and even of his character! We note here—the evidence is overwhelming—that strange acceleration of aesthetic continuity which characterizes the cinema. A writer may repeat himself both in matter and form over half a century. The talent of a film-maker, if he does not evolve with his art, lasts no more than five or ten years. This is why genius, less flexible and less conscious than talent, has frequent moments of extraordinary failure; for example, Stroheim, Abel Gance, Pudovkin. Certainly the causes of these profound disagreements between the artist and his art, which cruelly age genius and reduce it to nothing more than a sum of obsessions and useless megalomania, are multiple, and we are not going to analyze them here. But we would like to take up one of them which is directly related to our purpose.

Up till about 1938 the black-and-white cinema made continuous progress. At first it was a technical progress—artificial lighting, panchromatic emulsions, traveling shots, sound—and in consequence an enriching of the means of expression—close-up, montage, parallel montage, ellipsis, re-framing, and so on. Side by side with this rapid evolution of the language and in strict interdependence on it, film-makers discovered original themes to which the new art gave substance. "That is cinema!" was simply a reference to this phenomenon, which dominated the first thirty years of the film as art—that marvelous accord between a new technique and an unprecedented message. This phenomenon has taken on a great variety of forms: the star, reevaluation, the rebirth of the epic, of the *Commedia dell'Arte,* and so on. But it was directly attributable to technical progress—it was the novelty of expression which paid the price for new themes. For thirty years the history of cinematographic technique, in a broad sense, was bound up in practice with the development of the scenario. The great directors are first of all creators of form; if you wish, they are rhetoricians. This in no sense means that they supported the theory of "art

for art's sake," but simply that in the dialectic of form and content, form was then the determining factor in the same way that perspective or oils turned the pictorial world upside down.

We have only to go back 10 or 15 years to observe evidence of the aging of what was the patrimony of the art of cinema. We have noted the speedy death of certain types of film, even major ones like the slapstick comedy, but the most characteristic disappearance is undoubtedly that of the star. Certain actors have always been a commercial success with the public, but this devotion has nothing in common with the socioreligious phenomenon of which Rudolph Valentino and Greta Garbo were the golden calves. It all seemed as if the area of cinematic themes had exhausted whatever it could have hoped for from technique. It was no longer enough to invent quick cutting or a new style of photography, in order to stir people's emotions. Unaware, the cinema had passed into the age of the scenario. By this we mean a reversal of the relationship between matter and form. Not that form has become a matter of indifference, quite the opposite. It had never been more rigorously determined by the content or become more necessary or a matter of greater subtlety. But all this knowledge that we have acquired operates against the intrusion of form, rendering it virtually invisible before a subject that we appreciate today for its own sake and concerning which we become more and more exacting. Like those rivers which have finally hollowed out their beds and have only the strength left to carry their waters to the sea, without adding one single grain of sand to their banks, the cinema approaches its equilibrium-profile. The days are gone when it was enough to "make cinema" in order to deserve well of the seventh art. While we wait until color or stereoscopy provisionally return its primacy to form and create a new cycle of aesthetic erosion, on the surface cinema has no longer anything to conquer. There remains for it only to irrigate its banks, to insinuate itself between the arts among which it has so swiftly carved out its valleys, subtly to invest them, to infiltrate the subsoil, in order to excavate invisible galleries. The time of resurgence of a cinema newly independent of novel and theater will return. But it may then be because novels will be written directly onto film. As it awaits the dialectic of the history of art which will restore to it this desirable and hypothetical autonomy, the cinema draws into itself the formidable resources of elaborated subjects amassed around it by neighboring arts during the course of the centuries. It will make them its own because it has need of them and we experience the desire to rediscover them by way of the cinema.

This being done, cinema will not be a substitute for them, rather will the opposite be true. The success of filmed theater helps the theater just as the adaptation of the novel serves the purpose of literature. *Hamlet* on the screen can only increase Shakespeare's public and a part of this public at least will have the taste to go and hear it on the stage. *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne,* as seen by Robert Bresson, increased Bernanos' readers tenfold. The truth is there is here no competition or substitution, rather the adding of a new dimension that the arts had gradually lost from the time of the Reformation on: namely a public.

Who will complain of that?

Part Twelve

Modernism

In the context of an unfolding theory of the novel, Virginia Woolf's famous pronouncement—"on or about December, 1910, human character changed"—asks to be read in parodic allusion to the modern creed of radical discontinuity ("Mr. Bennett"). Woolf's own historiography, more nuanced than this, involves a notion of conventionality that conceives literary change as a process whereby (in Marx and Engels' terms) the facilitating "forms" of intercourse over time become "fetters upon it."[1] "A convention in writing . . . [,] not much different from a convention in manners, . . . ceases to be a means of communication between writer and reader, and becomes instead an obstacle and an impediment. At the present moment we are suffering, not from decay, but from having no code of manners which writers and readers accept as a prelude to the more exciting intercourse of friendship" ("Mr. Bennett"). This understanding issues in a periodization whose tripartite diachrony may recall that of poststructuralist novel theory.[2] In each chronology, the framing periods reflect and valorize each other over against the middle term. But whereas in poststructuralism, the devalued middle period is that of classic realism, in Woolf classic realism converges with the internalized, avant-garde realism of the Georgian modernists she herself represents in opposition to the brief, late-Victorian phase of exhausted conventionality (although her confidence in her Georgian continuity with the classic Victorians is also fragile) ("Mr. Bennett").

Firmly hermeneutic in her view of genre, Woolf locates the current revolution in literary conventions within a profound transformation in our conceptions of the real. If modernity once turned on its head the philosophical or metaphysical realism of tradition,[3] modernism now pursues a kind of neotraditionalism that replaces modern "materialism" by a passionate recourse to "the spirit." But this is spirit with a difference: not religious spirituality or philosophical universalism, but a realism of mind (Woolf writes six years before Ortega y Gasset announces the ascendance of "psychology"). And in her account of its superiority to materialist orthodoxy Woolf prefigures structuralist impatience with the way "plausible content" displaces and obscures literary essence: "So much of the enormous labor of proving the solidity, the likeness to life, of the story is not merely labor thrown away but labor misplaced to the extent of obscuring and blotting out the light of the conception. . . . Look

1. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology,* ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 86–87.

2. See above, ch. 26, below, pt. 13. See also above, headnotes to pt. 11.

3. Compare Ortega, *Meditations,* above, pt. 5; Watt, above, ch. 14; Levine, above, ch. 28.

within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this.' Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions. . . . Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit[?]" ("Modern").

Woolf would turn the instruments of empirical and visual examination inward, on the knowing subject, by which she centrally means on novelistic character: "[M]en and women write novels because they are lured on to create some character which has thus imposed itself upon them. . . . [I]t is to express character . . . that the form of the novels, so clumsy, verbose, and undramatic, so rich, elastic, and alive, has been evolved" ("Mr. Bennett"). As Woolf remarks, Arnold Bennett and the other Edwardian novelists agree on the importance of character; they differ from her Georgians in the way they would capture it. For Woolf, Mrs. Brown is an "overwhelming and peculiar impression" "composed of . . . [m]yriads of irrelevant and incongruous ideas. . . . [D]etails could wait. The important thing was to realize her character, to steep oneself in her atmosphere" ("Mr. Bennett"). Such characters are "complete" in themselves: to know them is to obtain instantaneous "insight" into them. For Bennett, however, to know a character requires that we recognize its "incompleteness," hence the need to discover, through "description," details "outside" character that will bring it to completion.[4] As a result, the "character" we most dependably come to know is really that of the author: "But we cannot hear her mother's voice, or Hilda's voice; we can only hear Mr. Bennett's voice telling us facts about rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines" ("Mr. Bennett").

As epic narration is to novelistic description, so Edwardian description is to Georgian insight. Woolf seems here to substantiate Ortega's adumbration of a realism—a conception of form-as-content—made modernist by being matched to the interiority of character. If realist distance involves a correlation of empirical objectivity and self-conscious reflexivity, evidence of the former is surely to be found in Woolf's dedication to an "experimental" method and to the microscopic "examination" of mental phenomena ("Modern," "Mr. Bennett"). Does she also reformulate the realist oscillation between object and subject?

Once the empirical object is contained within the realm of subjectivity, reflexivity names the relationship between distinct subjects: the character's, the narrator's, the reader's. Woolf evokes her own brilliant experiments in free indirect discourse in saying, of the "great novels" of the past, "if you think of these books, you do at once think of some character who has seemed to you so real . . . that it has the power to make you think not merely of itself, but of all sorts of things through its eyes" ("Mr. Bennett").[5] The idea of "probability,"

4. Because the norms of Woolf and the poststructuralists regarding both writing and reading novels have much in common, it's striking that the idea of the "completeness" of the text should have such opposite valences for them.

5. Notorious for her class-based ambivalence about her "public," Woolf here sympathetically identifies with a readership that sometimes can seem even to embody the dignity and acuity of the common (wo)man. Elsewhere, however, the reading public, the very last to know when a convention has become outworn, has a vulgarity that militates against any sympathetic, second-person transit between author, reader, and character (compare Woolf's reference to "the character of one's cook").

having lost its power to name the differential dialectic peculiar to modern cognition, now names Bennett's outworn recourse to external "vestments" ("Modern") even as the cognitive process to which it had referred is here rediscovered within the dialectic of subjectivities. At the same time, in her precocious evaluation of *Ulysses,* Woolf is aware that the Georgian writers run their own risk of unreflexive monovocality, of solipsism: "Is it due to the method that we feel neither jovial nor magnanimous, but centered in a self which, in spite of its tremor of susceptibility, never embraces or creates what is outside itself and beyond?" ("Modern").[6]

Woolf's misgivings about Joyce anticipate Lukács's dismissal of Woolf herself: "[T]he modernist writer identifies what is necessarily a subjective experience with reality as such, thus giving a distorted picture of reality as a whole (Virginia Woolf is an extreme example of this)." Are the principles underlying Lukács's critique of the modernist novel consistent with those of his earlier accounts of the novel as such? Already in the movement from *The Theory of the Novel* to *The Historical Novel* we've observed some fundamental shifts—for example, from the determinant priority of form to that of material context/content. However, if the Marxist Lukács abandoned his earliest view that novelistic reflection coheres in the thematization of form as content, he retained and refashioned the basic principle of "distance" which that view had supported. In *Realism in Our Time* as in *The Historical Novel,* content remains determinant, and the idea of distance is elaborated through a set of related terms—"perspective," "typology," "selection," "detachment"—that express the continuing conviction that representation requires the separability of subject from object.

For Lukács, the problem with modernism is that it fails to situate itself and its consumers in self-conscious relation to, hence apart from, the reality it purports to describe. "Life under capitalism is, often rightly, presented as a distortion. . . . But to present psychopathology as a way of escape from this distortion is itself a distortion. We are invited to measure one type of distortion against another and arrive, necessarily, at universal distortion. There is no principle to set against the general pattern, no standard by which the petty-bourgeois and the pathological can be seen in their social context." This is in large part a failure of formal technique, specifically, a failure to exploit the contradictory heterogeneity of infrastructural context so as to detach form from its synchronous subservience to the most immediately available contents. "The realist," on the other hand, "with his critical detachment, places what is a significant, specifically modern experience in a wider context, giving it only the emphasis it deserves as part of a greater, objective whole." In these terms, the problem with modernism seems to be that it's too selective. In other terms, however, Lukács insists that modernism fails because it isn't selective enough, because it's not "able to distinguish between significant and irrelevant detail."

6. To appreciate the close proximity of Woolf and Bennett on the normative principles of modern novel composition even as they locate negative examples principally in each other, see *The Author's Craft and Other Critical Writings of Arnold Bennett,* ed. Samuel Hynes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), e.g., 87–89, 218–21.

This failure is grounded in modernism's enthrallment to subjectivity.[7] According to Woolf, "[t]he mind receives a myriad impressions" which "it is the task of the novelist to convey" ("Modern"). According to Lukács, however, this is no more than a "naïveté" that sticks to "first impressions": "The possibilities in a man's mind . . . will border on the infinite. . . . It is thus a hopeless undertaking to define the contours of individuality, let alone to come to grips with a man's actual fate, by means of potentiality. The *abstract* character of potentiality is clear from the fact that it cannot determine development. . . . Abstract potentiality belongs wholly to the realm of subjectivity; whereas concrete potentiality is concerned with the dialectic between the individual's subjectivity and objective reality. . . . Only in the interaction of character and environment can the concrete potentiality of a particular individual be singled out from the 'bad infinity'[8] of purely abstract potentialities, and emerge as the determining potentiality of just this individual at just this phase of his development. This principle alone enables the artist to distinguish concrete potentiality from a myriad abstractions." The critique of modernist subjectivity thus grows out of Lukács's theory of novelistic characterization as an oscillation between individuality and typicality. "Since human nature is not fully separable from social reality, each narrative detail will be significant to the extent that it expresses the dialectic between man-as-individual and man-as-social-being."

All this is to say that Lukács disagrees not with Woolf's belief in the centrality of character to the modern novel, but with her view that realism may be as it were internalized—that character may be expressed through an intrasubjective oscillation. Against her embrace of the new realism of interiority he denounces "'modernist' anti-realism" for its inability to establish the three-dimensional, dialectical dynamic crucial to realist epistemology. Consequently Lukács is able to make the seemingly paradoxical, and deeply arresting, charge that modernism properly understood is a mode of "naturalism." Modern prejudices are hereby turned on their heads. "Naturalism," the ideology of direct and transparent reflection, is actually the very opposite of the "realism" with which it is vulgarly associated.[9] Moreover modernism is a mode of naturalism because it uncritically naturalizes what it sees before it in the empirical objectivity of its mind's eye. The transparency effect is a consequence not of probability or verisimilitude—of "lifelikeness"—but of forgoing the differential of which realist probability provides one example: the formal establishment of a difference between subject and object, between representation and what it represents. In its dedication to the objective depiction of subjectivity modernism fulfills the first but not the second aspect of Lukács's

7. Compare *Theory* on the dominance of soul over world, interiority over adventure, in the novel of the "romanticism of disillusionment" (above, pt. 4).

8. On bad infinity see above, headnote to pt. 4. Modernist subjectivity thus renews the problem of unlimited inclusiveness which novelistic realism overcomes through the biographical construction of character.

9. Like the common view of "realism" that Lukács would refute, this understanding of "naturalism" may also be reductive by the standards of Emile Zola and its other theorists.

"double reflection."[10] Consequently "[t]he reflection of a distortion becomes a distorted reflection."

For Lukács, we might say, modernism marks the point at which the novel has crossed the line between "having a problematic" and "being problematic."[11] In classic realism, the reflexivity of formal technique analogically binds the search of the reader to the search of the protagonist; but as a mode of cognitive detachment it also alienates the former from the latter's problematic alienation. The modernist individual is conceived, however, in its "basic solitariness," as "an ahistorical being . . . without personal history" or community. This flattening of the biographical search for home into the impersonal condition of homelessness is registered by a formal technique so utterly reflective of content as to be existentially inseparable from it.

As the utopian projection of modernist ideology, this condition of inseparability, mimicking the direct givenness and concrete totality of traditional culture, aims to extend the modern project of an internalized "psychic community" initiated by domestic ideology.[12] For Lukács, however, the strategy of internalization, so far from enabling the self-conscious realist "construction" of a formerly "natural" structure, instead bespeaks "the disintegration of personality."[13] Closer in his neotraditionalist utopianism to Benjamin than to Woolf, Lukács opposes to modernist psychic community the modernized social community of socialism and socialist realism. By the latter he means not Stalinist "dogmatism" (which only echoes the "subjectivist dogmatism" of modernism), but a development of critical realism that expands its typological breadth of perspective into a socialist future where biographical *Bildung* merges with communitarian "social being." If the narrative productions of modernism are discontinuous with the novel genre, socialist realism innovatively fashions matter so as to sustain the formal continuity of the genre.

In the course of his critique, Lukács suggests that modernism's failure to achieve perspective is bound up with its insistence that "[e]xperienced time, subjective time" is not simply separable from the objective temporality of "historical change and particularity of place," but must be positively embraced as the normative criterion of "real" and "authentic" temporality. Joseph Frank's influential essay may serve here to represent the modernist counter-argument. What is dismissed by Lukács as a "static approach to reality" provides instead a perspective on—a liberating detachment from—the naturalized plausibility of linear temporality that is the hallmark of realist technique. "Spatial form" positively reconceives the "static" quality of modernist art as a dynamic accommodation of the temporality inherent in linguistic and literary media to the spatiality proper to visual and pictorial media. ("Spatialization" thus identifies an interaction between artistic media analogous, in form if not in substance, to that named by "novelization" at the level of literary modes.) Although Frank knows the relevance of film ("moving pictures") to this sort of dynamic, he's

10. See *Theory,* above, pt. 4.

11. See ibid.

12. See above, headnote to pt. 8.

13. Lukács revives here some of the terminology of *Theory.*

not concerned to argue the influence of cinematic technology on literary technique.[14] On the contrary, he emphasizes the originality of the effects achieved by modernist experiments with language, a revolution that brought to a close four centuries of unrelieved "naturalism"[15] by instituting "the principle of reflexive reference."

Within the context of the theory of the novel, Frank's exposition of this principle may well lead us to question its fundamental discontinuity with techniques of novelistic distance, reflexivity, perspective, parody, and simultaneity as theorized by Lukács, Ortega y Gasset, Bakhtin, Anderson, and others. Yet in the novels of Joyce and Proust, Frank finds a technique of elevation or absentation that suggests a realist exercise in critical detachment ratcheted up to the notch at which temporality itself is suspended. Modernism becomes intelligible not simply as a departure from realism, but as a "quantitative" extension of it so radical as to become "qualitatively" different, a dialectical pursuit of continuity into difference. Spatial form, one might say, closes the frame opened two centuries earlier by the proto-realist claim to historicity,[16] whose underemphasis on distance is antithetically recapitulated by the overemphasis entailed in spatial form.

At root a historical process, distance or detachment at some indeterminate point of transition ceases to proceed *through* history and becomes a departure *from* (the diachronic dimension of) history. Frank's attentiveness to the synchronic character of spatial form supports his association of modernism with the modern effort to retrieve myth to which structuralism has self-consciously linked itself. Like the savage mind, the modernist mind would set myth against novel, "structure" against "history"—but (unlike the savage mind) under historical conditions that insist upon the utter modernity of all such (neo)traditionalisms. Frank's bi-leveled emphasis on narratives of discontinuity, at the micro-level of spatial form and at the macro-level of historiography, therefore tacitly entails the self-corrective acknowledgment that discontinuity is the product of continuity.[17]

14. Contrast Cohen, above. ch. 32.

15. Unlike for Lukács, "naturalism" is here synonymous with "realism," and it characterizes the traditional experience of "concrete totality" against which Lukács defines novelistic epistemology in *Theory.*

16. On which see above, McKeon, ch. 15.

17. On the tendency toward micro- and macro-narrative parallels in the theory of the novel, and on structuralism's neotraditionalism, see above, headnote to pt. 2.

34

Virginia Woolf

Modern Fiction

In making any survey, even the freest and loosest, of modern fiction it is difficult not to take it for granted that the modern practice of the art is somehow an improvement upon the old. With their simple tools and primitive materials, it might be said, Fielding did well and Jane Austen even better, but compare their opportunities with ours! Their masterpieces certainly have a strange air of simplicity. And yet the analogy between literature and the process, to choose an example, of making motor cars scarcely holds good beyond the first glance. It is doubtful whether in the course of the centuries, though we have learnt much about making machines, we have learnt anything about making literature. We do not come to write better; all that we can be said to do is to keep moving, now a little in this direction, now in that, but with a circular tendency should the whole course of the track be viewed from a sufficiently lofty pinnacle. It need scarcely be said that we make no claim to stand, even momentarily, upon that vantage ground. On the flat, in the crowd, half blind with dust, we look back with envy to those happier warriors, whose battle is won and whose achievements wear so serene an air of accomplishment that we can scarcely refrain from whispering that the fight was not so fierce for them as for us. It is for the historian of literature to decide; for him to say if we are now beginning or ending or standing in the middle of a great period of prose fiction, for down in the plain little is visible. We only know that certain gratitudes and hostilities inspire us; that certain paths seem to lead to fertile land, others to the dust and the desert; and of this perhaps it may be worth while to attempt some account.

Our quarrel, then, is not with the classics, and if we speak of quarreling with Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy it is partly that by the mere fact of their existence in the flesh their work has a living, breathing, every-day imperfection which bids us take what liberties with it we choose. But it is also true that, while we thank them for a thousand gifts, we reserve our unconditional gratitude for Mr. Hardy, for Mr. Conrad, and in a much lesser degree for the Mr. Hudson, of *The Purple Land, Green Mansions,* and *Far Away and Long Ago.* Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy have excited so many hopes and disappointed them so persistently that our gratitude largely takes the form of thanking them for having shown us what they might have done but have not done; what we certainly could not do, but as certainly, perhaps, do not wish to do. No single phrase will sum up the charge or grievance which we have to bring against a mass of work so large in its volume and embodying so many qualities, both admirable and the reverse. If we tried to formulate our

meaning in one word we should say that these three writers are materialists. It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul. Naturally, no single word reaches the center of three separate targets. In the case of Mr. Wells it falls notably wide of the mark. And yet even with him it indicates to our thinking the fatal alloy in his genius, the great clod of clay that has got itself mixed up with the purity of his inspiration. But Mr. Bennett is perhaps the worst culprit of the three, inasmuch as he is by far the best workman. He can make a book so well constructed and solid in its craftsmanship that it is difficult for the most exacting of critics to see through what chink or crevice decay can creep in. There is not so much as a draught between the frames of the windows, or a crack in the boards. And yet—if life should refuse to live there? That is a risk which the creator of *The Old Wives' Tale,* George Cannon, Edwin Clayhanger, and hosts of other figures, may well claim to have surmounted. His characters live abundantly, even unexpectedly, but it remains to ask how do they live, and what do they live for? More and more they seem to us, deserting even the well-built villa in the Five Towns, to spend their time in some softly padded first-class railway carriage, pressing bells and buttons innumerable; and the destiny to which they travel so luxuriously becomes more and more unquestionably an eternity of bliss spent in the very best hotel in Brighton. It can scarcely be said of Mr. Wells that he is a materialist in the sense that he takes too much delight in the solidity of his fabric. His mind is too generous in its sympathies to allow him to spend much time in making things shipshape and substantial. He is a materialist from sheer goodness of heart, taking upon his shoulders the work that ought to have been discharged by Government officials, and in the plethora of his ideas and facts scarcely having leisure to realize, or forgetting to think important, the crudity and coarseness of his human beings. Yet what more damaging criticism can there be both of his earth and of his Heaven than that they are to be inhabited here and hereafter by his Joans and his Peters? Does not the inferiority of their natures tarnish whatever institutions and ideals may be provided for them by the generosity of their creator? Nor, profoundly though we respect the integrity and humanity of Mr. Galsworthy, shall we find what we seek in his pages.

If we fasten, then, one label on all these books, on which is one word, materialists, we mean by it that they write of unimportant things; that they spend immense skill and immense industry making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring.

We have to admit that we are exacting, and, further, that we find it difficult to justify our discontent by explaining what it is that we exact. We frame our question differently at different times. But it reappears most persistently as we drop the finished novel on the crest of a sigh—Is it worth while? What is the point of it all? Can it be that owing to one of those little deviations which the human spirit seems to make from time to time Mr. Bennett has come down with his magnificent apparatus for catching life just an inch or two on the wrong side? Life escapes; and perhaps without life nothing else is

worth while. It is a confession of vagueness to have to make use of such a figure as this, but we scarcely better the matter by speaking, as critics are prone to do, of reality. Admitting the vagueness which afflicts all criticism of novels, let us hazard the opinion that for us at this moment the form of fiction most in vogue more often misses than secures the thing we seek. Whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality, this, the essential thing, has moved off, or on, and refuses to be contained any longer in such ill-fitting vestments as we provide. Nevertheless, we go on perseveringly, conscientiously, constructing our two and thirty chapters after a design which more and more ceases to resemble the vision in our minds. So much of the enormous labor of proving the solidity, the likeness to life, of the story is not merely labor thrown away but labor misplaced to the extent of obscuring and blotting out the light of the conception. The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love, interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour. The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn. But sometimes, more and more often as time goes by, we suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. Is life like this? Must novels be like this?

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being "like this." Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it.

It is, at any rate, in some such fashion as this that we seek to define the quality which distinguishes the work of several young writers, among whom Mr. James Joyce is the most notable, from that of their predecessors. They attempt to come closer to life, and to preserve more sincerely and exactly what interests and moves them, even if to do so they must discard most of the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist. Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each

sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small. Any one who has read *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or, what promises to be a far more interesting work, *Ulysses,*[1] now appearing in the *Little Review,* will have hazarded some theory of this nature as to Mr. Joyce's intention. On our part, with such a fragment before us, it is hazarded rather than affirmed; but whatever the intention of the whole there can be no question but that it is of the utmost sincerity and that the result, difficult or unpleasant as we may judge it, is undeniably important. In contrast with those whom we have called materialists Mr. Joyce is spiritual; he is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious, whether it be probability, or coherence or any other of these signposts which for generations have served to support the imagination of a reader when called upon to imagine what he can neither touch nor see. The scene in the cemetery, for instance, with its brilliancy, its sordidity, its incoherence, its sudden lightning flashes of significance, does undoubtedly come so close to the quick of the mind that, on a first reading at any rate, it is difficult not to acclaim a masterpiece. If we want life itself here, surely we have it. Indeed, we find ourselves fumbling rather awkwardly if we try to say what else we wish, and for what reason a work of such originality yet fails to compare, for we must take high examples, with *Youth* or *The Mayor of Casterbridge.* It fails because of the comparative poverty of the writer's mind, we might say simply and have done with it. But it is possible to press a little further and wonder whether we may not refer our sense of being in a bright yet narrow room, confined and shut in, rather than enlarged and set free, to some limitation imposed by the method as well as by the mind. Is it the method that inhibits the creative power? Is it due to the method that we feel neither jovial nor magnanimous, but centered in a self which, in spite of its tremor of susceptibility, never embraces or creates what is outside itself and beyond? Does the emphasis laid, perhaps didactically, upon indecency, contribute to the effect of something angular and isolated? Or is it merely that in any effort of such originality it is much easier, for contemporaries especially, to feel what it lacks than to name what it gives? In any case it is a mistake to stand outside examining "methods." Any method is right, every method is right, that expresses what we wish to express, if we are writers; that brings us closer to the novelist's intention if we are readers. This method has the merit of bringing us closer to what we were prepared to call life itself; did not the reading of *Ulysses* suggest how much of life is excluded or ignored, and did it not come with a shock to open *Tristram Shandy* or even *Pendennis* and be by them convinced that there are not only other aspects of life, but more important ones into the bargain.

However this may be, the problem before the novelist at present, as we suppose it to have been in the past, is to contrive means of being free to set down what he chooses. He has to have the courage to say that what interests him is no longer "this" but "that": out of "that" alone must he construct his work. For the moderns "that," the point of interest, lies very likely in the dark

places of psychology. At once, therefore, the accent falls a little differently; the emphasis is upon something hitherto ignored; at once a different outline of form becomes necessary, difficult for us to grasp, incomprehensible to our predecessors. No one but a modern, perhaps no one but a Russian, would have felt the interest of the situation which Tchekov has made into the short story which he calls "Gusev." Some Russian soldiers lie ill on board a ship which is taking them back to Russia. We are given a few scraps of their talk and some of their thoughts; then one of them dies and is carried away; the talk goes on among the others for a time, until Gusev himself dies, and looking "like a carrot or a radish" is thrown overboard. The emphasis is laid upon such unexpected places that at first it seems as if there were no emphasis at all; and then, as the eyes accustom themselves to twilight and discern the shapes of things in a room we see how complete the story is, how profound, and how truly in obedience to his vision Tchekov has chosen this, that, and the other, and placed them together to compose something new. But it is impossible to say "this is comic," or "that is tragic," nor are we certain, since short stories, we have been taught, should be brief and conclusive, whether this, which is vague and inconclusive, should be called a short story at all.

The most elementary remarks upon modern English fiction can hardly avoid some mention of the Russian influence, and if the Russians are mentioned one runs the risk of feeling that to write of any fiction save theirs is waste of time. If we want understanding of the soul and heart where else shall we find it of comparable profundity? If we are sick of our own materialism the least considerable of their novelists has by right of birth a natural reverence for the human spirit. "Learn to make yourself akin to people. . . . But let this sympathy be not with the mind—for it is easy with the mind—but with the heart, with love towards them." In every great Russian writer we seem to discern the features of a saint, if sympathy for the sufferings of others, love towards them, endeavor to reach some goal worthy of the most exacting demands of the spirit constitute saintliness. It is the saint in them which confounds us with a feeling of our own irreligious triviality, and turns so many of our famous novels to tinsel and trickery. The conclusions of the Russian mind, thus comprehensive and compassionate, are inevitably, perhaps, of the utmost sadness. More accurately indeed we might speak of the inconclusiveness of the Russian mind. It is the sense that there is no answer, that if honestly examined life presents question after question which must be left to sound on and on after the story is over in hopeless interrogation that fills us with a deep, and finally it may be with a resentful, despair. They are right perhaps; unquestionably they see further than we do and without our gross impediments of vision. But perhaps we see something that escapes them, or why should this voice of protest mix itself with our gloom? The voice of protest is the voice of another and an ancient civilization which seems to have bred in us the instinct to enjoy and fight rather than to suffer and understand. English fiction from Sterne to Meredith bears witness to our natural delight in humor and comedy, in the beauty of earth, in the activities of the intellect, and in the splendor of the body. But any deductions that we may draw from the comparison of two fictions so immeasurably far apart are futile save indeed

as they flood us with a view of the infinite possibilities of the art and remind us that there is no limit to the horizon, and that nothing—no "method," no experiment, even of the wildest—is forbidden, but only falsity and pretence. "The proper stuff of fiction" does not exist; everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss. And if we can imagine the art of fiction come alive and standing in our midst, she would undoubtedly bid us break her and bully her, as well as honor and love her, for so her youth is renewed and her sovereignty assured.

Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown[2]

It seems to me possible, perhaps desirable, that I may be the only person in this room who has committed the folly of writing, trying to write, or failing to write, a novel. And when I asked myself, as your invitation to speak to you about modern fiction made me ask myself, what demon whispered in my ear and urged me to my doom, a little figure rose before me—the figure of a man, or of a woman, who said, "My name is Brown. Catch me if you can."

Most novelists have the same experience. Some Brown, Smith, or Jones comes before them and says in the most seductive and charming way in the world, "Come and catch me if you can." And so, led on by this will-o'-the-wisp, they flounder through volume after volume, spending the best years of their lives in the pursuit, and receiving for the most part very little cash in exchange. Few catch the phantom; most have to be content with a scrap of her dress or a wisp of her hair.

My belief that men and women write novels because they are lured on to create some character which has thus imposed itself upon them has the sanction of Mr. Arnold Bennett. In an article from which I will quote he says, "The foundation of good fiction is character-creating and nothing else. . . . Style counts; plot counts; originality of outlook counts. But none of these counts anything like so much as the convincingness of the characters. If the characters are real the novel will have a chance; if they are not, oblivion will be its portion." And he goes on to draw the conclusion that we have no young novelists of first-rate importance at the present moment, because they are unable to create characters that are real, true, and convincing.

These are the questions that I want with greater boldness than discretion to discuss tonight. I want to make out what we mean when we talk about "character" in fiction; to say something about the question of reality which Mr. Bennett raises; and to suggest some reasons why the younger novelists fail to create characters, if, as Mr. Bennett asserts, it is true that fail they do. This will lead me, I am well aware, to make some very sweeping and some very vague assertions. For the question is an extremely difficult one. Think how little we know about character—think how little we know about art. But, to make a clearance before I begin, I will suggest that we range Edwardians and Georgians into two camps; Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy I will call the Edwardians; Mr. Forster, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Strachey, Mr. Joyce, and Mr. Eliot I will call the Georgians. And if I speak in the first person, with intolerable egotism, I will ask you to excuse me. I do not want to attribute to the world at large the opinions of one solitary, ill-informed, and misguided individual.

My first assertion is one that I think you will grant—that everyone in this

room is a judge of character. Indeed it would be impossible to live for a year without disaster unless one practiced character-reading and had some skill in the art. Our marriages, our friendships depend on it; our business largely depends on it; every day questions arise which can only be solved by its help. And now I will hazard a second assertion, which is more disputable perhaps, to the effect that on or about December, 1910, human character changed.

I am not saying that one went out, as one might into a garden, and there saw that a rose had flowered, or that a hen had laid an egg. The change was not sudden and definite like that. But a change there was, nevertheless; and, since one must be arbitrary, let us date it about the year 1910. The first signs of it are recorded in the books of Samuel Butler, in *The Way of All Flesh* in particular; the plays of Bernard Shaw continue to record it. In life one can see the change, if I may use a homely illustration, in the character of one's cook. The Victorian cook lived like a leviathan in the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable; the Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air; in and out of the drawing-room, now to borrow the *Daily Herald,* now to ask advice about a hat. Do you ask for more solemn instances of the power of the human race to change? Read the *Agamemnon,* and see whether, in process of time, your sympathies are not almost entirely with Clytemnestra. Or consider the married life of the Carlyles and bewail the waste, the futility, for him and for her, of the horrible domestic tradition which made it seemly for a woman of genius to spend her time chasing beetles, scouring saucepans, instead of writing books. All human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature. Let us agree to place one of these changes about the year 1910.

I have said that people have to acquire a good deal of skill in character-reading if they are to live a single year of life without disaster. But it is the art of the young. In middle age and in old age the art is practiced mostly for its uses, and friendships and other adventures and experiments in the art of reading character are seldom made. But novelists differ from the rest of the world because they do not cease to be interested in character when they have learnt enough about it for practical purposes. They go a step further, they feel that there is something permanently interesting in character in itself. When all the practical business of life has been discharged, there is something about people which continues to seem to them of overwhelming importance, in spite of the fact that it has no bearing whatever upon their happiness, comfort, or income. The study of character becomes to them an absorbing pursuit; to impart character an obsession. And this I find it very difficult to explain: what novelists mean when they talk about character, what the impulse is that urges them so powerfully every now and then to embody their view in writing.

So, if you will allow me, instead of analyzing and abstracting, I will tell you a simple story which, however pointless, has the merit of being true, of a journey from Richmond to Waterloo, in the hope that I may show you what I mean by character in itself; that you may realize the different aspects it can

wear; and the hideous perils that beset you directly you try to describe it in words.

One night some weeks ago, then, I was late for the train and jumped into the first carriage I came to. As I sat down I had the strange and uncomfortable feeling that I was interrupting a conversation between two people who were already sitting there. Not that they were young or happy. Far from it. They were both elderly, the woman over sixty, the man well over forty. They were sitting opposite each other, and the man, who had been leaning over and talking emphatically to judge by his attitude and the flush on his face, sat back and became silent. I had disturbed him, and he was annoyed. The elderly lady, however, whom I will call Mrs. Brown, seemed rather relieved. She was one of those clean, threadbare old ladies whose extreme tidiness—everything buttoned, fastened, tied together, mended and brushed up—suggests more extreme poverty than rags and dirt. There was something pinched about her—a look of suffering, of apprehension, and, in addition, she was extremely small. Her feet, in their clean little boots, scarcely touched the floor. I felt that she had nobody to support her; that she had to make up her mind for herself; that, having been deserted, or left a widow, years ago, she had led an anxious, harried life, bringing up an only son, perhaps, who, as likely as not, was by this time beginning to go to the bad. All this shot through my mind as I sat down, being uncomfortable, like most people, at traveling with fellow passengers unless I have somehow or other accounted for them. Then I looked at the man. He was no relation of Mrs. Brown's I felt sure; he was of a bigger, burlier, less refined type. He was a man of business I imagined, very likely a respectable corn-chandler from the North, dressed in good blue serge with a pocket-knife and a silk handkerchief, and a stout leather bag. Obviously, however, he had an unpleasant business to settle with Mrs. Brown; a secret, perhaps sinister business, which they did not intend to discuss in my presence.

"Yes, the Crofts have had very bad luck with their servants," Mr. Smith (as I will call him) said in a considering way, going back to some earlier topic, with a view to keeping up appearances.

"Ah, poor people," said Mrs. Brown, a trifle condescendingly. "My grandmother had a maid who came when she was fifteen and stayed till she was eighty" (this was said with a kind of hurt and aggressive pride to impress us both perhaps).

"One doesn't often come across that sort of thing nowadays," said Mr. Smith in conciliatory tones.

Then they were silent.

"It's odd they don't start a golf club there—I should have thought one of the young fellows would," said Mr. Smith, for the silence obviously made him uneasy.

Mrs. Brown hardly took the trouble to answer.

"What changes they're making in this part of the world," said Mr. Smith, looking out of the window, and looking furtively at me as he did so.

It was plain, from Mrs. Brown's silence, from the uneasy affability with which Mr. Smith spoke, that he had some power over her which he was ex-

erting disagreeably. It might have been her son's downfall, or some painful episode in her past life, or her daughter's. Perhaps she was going to London to sign some document to make over some property. Obviously against her will she was in Mr. Smith's hands. I was beginning to feel a great deal of pity for her, when she said, suddenly and inconsequently:

"Can you tell me if an oak-tree dies when the leaves have been eaten for two years in succession by caterpillars?"

She spoke quite brightly, and rather precisely, in a cultivated, inquisitive voice.

Mr. Smith was startled, but relieved to have a safe topic of conversation given him. He told her a great deal very quickly about plagues of insects. He told her that he had a brother who kept a fruit farm in Kent. He told her what fruit farmers do every year in Kent, and so on, and so on. While he talked a very odd thing happened. Mrs. Brown took out her little white handkerchief and began to dab her eyes. She was crying. But she went on listening quite composedly to what he was saying, and he went on talking, a little louder, a little angrily, as if he had seen her cry often before; as if it were a painful habit. At last it got on his nerves. He stopped abruptly, looked out of the window, then leant towards her as he had been doing when I got in, and said in a bullying, menacing way, as if he would not stand any more nonsense:

"So about that matter we were discussing. It'll be all right? George will be there on Tuesday?"

"We shan't be late," said Mrs. Brown, gathering herself together with superb dignity.

Mr. Smith said nothing. He got up, buttoned his coat, reached his bag down, and jumped out of the train before it had stopped at Clapham Junction. He had got what he wanted, but he was ashamed of himself; he was glad to get out of the old lady's sight.

Mrs. Brown and I were left alone together. She sat in her corner opposite, very clean, very small, rather queer, and suffering intensely. The impression she made was overwhelming. It came pouring out like a draught, like a smell of burning. What was it composed of—that overwhelming and peculiar impression? Myriads of irrelevant and incongruous ideas crowd into one's head on such occasions; one sees the person, one sees Mrs. Brown, in the center of all sorts of different scenes. I thought of her in a seaside house, among queer ornaments: sea-urchins, models of ships in glass cases. Her husband's medals were on the mantelpiece. She popped in and out of the room, perching on the edges of chairs, picking meals out of saucers, indulging in long, silent stares. The caterpillars and the oak-trees seemed to imply all that. And then, into this fantastic and secluded life, in broke Mr. Smith. I saw him blowing in, so to speak, on a windy day. He banged, he slammed. His dripping umbrella made a pool in the hall. They sat closeted together.

And then Mrs. Brown faced the dreadful revelation. She took her heroic decision. Early, before dawn, she packed her bag and carried it herself to the station. She would not let Smith touch it. She was wounded in her pride, unmoored from her anchorage; she came of gentlefolks who kept servants—but details could wait. The important thing was to realize her character, to

steep oneself in her atmosphere. I had no time to explain why I felt it somewhat tragic, heroic, yet with a dash of the flighty and fantastic, before the train stopped, and I watched her disappear, carrying her bag, into the vast blazing station. She looked very small, very tenacious; at once very frail and very heroic. And I have never seen her again, and I shall never know what became of her.

The story ends without any point to it. But I have not told you this anecdote to illustrate either my own ingenuity or the pleasure of traveling from Richmond to Waterloo. What I want you to see in it is this. Here is a character imposing itself upon another person. Here is Mrs. Brown making someone begin almost automatically to write a novel about her. I believe that all novels begin with an old lady in the corner opposite. I believe that all novels, that is to say, deal with character, and that it is to express character—not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novels, so clumsy, verbose, and undramatic, so rich, elastic, and alive, has been evolved. To express character, I have said; but you will at once reflect that the very widest interpretation can be put upon those words. For example, old Mrs. Brown's character will strike you very differently according to the age and country in which you happen to be born. It would be easy enough to write three different versions of that incident in the train, an English, a French, and a Russian. The English writer would make the old lady into a "character"; he would bring out her oddities and mannerisms; her buttons and wrinkles; her ribbons and warts. Her personality would dominate the book. A French writer would rub out all that; he would sacrifice the individual Mrs. Brown to give a more general view of human nature; to make a more abstract, proportioned, and harmonious whole. The Russian would pierce through the flesh; would reveal the soul—the soul alone, wandering out into the Waterloo Road, asking of life some tremendous question which would sound on and on in our ears after the book was finished. And then besides age and country there is the writer's temperament to be considered. You see one thing in character, and I another. You say it means this, and I that. And when it comes to writing each makes a further selection on principles of his own. Thus Mrs. Brown can be treated in an infinite variety of ways, according to the age, country, and temperament of the writer.

But now I must recall what Mr. Arnold Bennett says. He says that it is only if the characters are real that the novel has any chance of surviving. Otherwise, die it must. But, I ask myself, what is reality? And who are the judges of reality? A character may be real to Mr. Bennett and quite unreal to me. For instance, in this article he says that Dr. Watson in *Sherlock Holmes* is real to him: to me Dr. Watson is a sack stuffed with straw, a dummy, a figure of fun. And so it is with character after character—in book after book. There is nothing that people differ about more than the reality of characters, especially in contemporary books. But if you take a larger view I think that Mr. Bennett is perfectly right. If, that is, you think of the novels which seem to you great novels—*War and Peace, Vanity Fair, Tristram Shandy, Madame Bovary, Pride and Prejudice, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Villette*—if you think of these books, you do at once think of some character who has seemed to you so real (I do

not by that mean so lifelike) that it has the power to make you think not merely of it itself, but of all sorts of things through its eyes—of religion, of love, of war, of peace, of family life, of balls in country towns, of sunsets, moonrises, the immortality of the soul. There is hardly any subject of human experience that is left out of *War and Peace* it seems to me. And in all these novels all these great novelists have brought us to see whatever they wish us to see through some character. Otherwise, they would not be novelists; but poets, historians, or pamphleteers.

But now let us examine what Mr. Bennett went on to say—he said that there was no great novelist among the Georgian writers because they cannot create characters who are real, true, and convincing. And there I cannot agree. There are reasons, excuses, possibilities which I think put a different color upon the case. It seems so to me at least, but I am well aware that this is a matter about which I am likely to be prejudiced, sanguine, and nearsighted. I will put my view before you in the hope that you will make it impartial, judicial, and broad-minded. Why, then, is it so hard for novelists at present to create characters which seem real, not only to Mr. Bennett, but to the world at large? Why, when October comes round, do the publishers always fail to supply us with a masterpiece?

Surely one reason is that the men and women who began writing novels in 1910 or thereabouts had this great difficulty to face—that there was no English novelist living from whom they could learn their business. Mr. Conrad is a Pole; which sets him apart, and makes him, however admirable, not very helpful. Mr. Hardy has written no novel since 1895. The most prominent and successful novelists in the year 1910 were, I suppose, Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy. Now it seems to me that to go to these men and ask them to teach you how to write a novel—how to create characters that are real—is precisely like going to a boot maker and asking him to teach you how to make a watch. Do not let me give you the impression that I do not admire and enjoy their books. They seem to me of great value, and indeed of great necessity. There are seasons when it is more important to have boots than to have watches. To drop metaphor, I think that after the creative activity of the Victorian age it was quite necessary, not only for literature but for life, that someone should write the books that Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy have written. Yet what odd books they are! Sometimes I wonder if we are right to call them books at all. For they leave one with so strange a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. In order to complete them it seems necessary to do something—to join a society, or, more desperately, to write a check. That done, the restlessness is laid, the book finished; it can be put upon the shelf, and need never be read again. But with the work of other novelists it is different. *Tristram Shandy* or *Pride and Prejudice* is complete in itself; it is self-contained; it leaves one with no desire to do anything, except indeed to read the book again, and to understand it better. The difference perhaps is that both Sterne and Jane Austen were interested in things in themselves; in character, in itself; in the book in itself. Therefore everything was inside the book, nothing outside. But the Edwardians were never interested in character

in itself; or in the book in itself. They were interested in something outside. Their books, then, were incomplete as books, and required that the reader should finish them, actively and practically, for himself.

Perhaps we can make this clearer if we take the liberty of imagining a little party in the railway carriage—Mr. Wells, Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Bennett are travelling to Waterloo with Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown, I have said, was poorly dressed and very small. She had an anxious, harassed look. I doubt whether she was what you call an educated woman. Seizing upon all these symptoms of the unsatisfactory condition of our primary schools with a rapidity to which I can do no justice, Mr. Wells would instantly project upon the window-pane a vision of a better, breezier, jollier, happier, more adventurous and gallant world, where these musty railway carriages and fusty old women do not exist; where miraculous barges bring tropical fruit to Camberwell by eight o'clock in the morning; where there are public nurseries, fountains, and libraries, dining-rooms, drawing-rooms, and marriages; where every citizen is generous and candid, manly and magnificent, and rather like Mr. Wells himself. But nobody is in the least like Mrs. Brown. There are no Mrs. Browns in Utopia. Indeed I do not think that Mr. Wells, in his passion to make her what she ought to be, would waste a thought upon her as she is. And what would Mr. Galsworthy see? Can we doubt that the walls of Doulton's factory would take his fancy? There are women in that factory who make twenty-five dozen earthenware pots every day. There are mothers in the Mile End Road who depend upon the farthings which those women earn. But there are employers in Surrey who are even now smoking rich cigars while the nightingale sings. Burning with indignation, stuffed with information, arraigning civilization, Mr. Galsworthy would only see in Mrs. Brown a pot broken on the wheel and thrown into the corner.

Mr. Bennett, alone of the Edwardians, would keep his eyes in the carriage. He, indeed, would observe every detail with immense care. He would notice the advertisements; the pictures of Swanage and Portsmouth; the way in which the cushion bulged between the buttons; how Mrs. Brown wore a brooch which had cost three-and-ten-three at Whitworth's bazaar; and had mended both gloves—indeed the thumb of the left-hand glove had been replaced. And he would observe, at length, how this was the nonstop train from Windsor which calls at Richmond for the convenience of middle-class residents, who can afford to go to the theater but have not reached the social rank which can afford motor-cars, though it is true, there are occasions (he would tell us what), when they hire them from a company (he would tell us which). And so he would gradually sidle sedately toward Mrs. Brown, and would remark how she had been left a little copyhold, not freehold, property at Datchet, which, however, was mortgaged to Mr. Bungay the solicitor—but why should I presume to invent Mr. Bennett? Does not Mr. Bennett write novels himself? I will open the first book that chance puts in my way—*Hilda Lessways.* Let us see how he makes us feel that Hilda is real, true, and convincing, as a novelist should. She shut the door in a soft, controlled way, which showed the constraint of her relations with her mother. She was fond of reading *Maud;*

she was endowed with the power to feel intensely. So far, so good; in his leisurely, surefooted way Mr. Bennett is trying in these first pages, where every touch is important, to show us the kind of girl she was.

But then he begins to describe, not Hilda Lessways, but the view from her bedroom window, the excuse being that Mr. Skellorn, the man who collects rents, is coming along that way. Mr. Bennett proceeds:

"The bailiwick of Turnhill lay behind her; and all the murky district of the Five Towns, of which Turnhill is the northern outpost, lay to the south. At the foot of Chatterley Wood the canal wound in large curves on its way towards the undefiled plains of Cheshire and the sea. On the canal-side, exactly opposite to Hilda's window, was a flour-mill, that sometimes made nearly as much smoke as the kilns and the chimneys closing the prospect on either hand. From the flour-mill a bricked path, which separated a considerable row of new cottages from their appurtenant gardens, led straight into Lessways Street, in front of Mrs. Lessway's house. By this path Mr. Skellorn should have arrived, for he inhabited the farthest of the cottages."

One line of insight would have done more than all those lines of description; but let them pass as the necessary drudgery of the novelist. And now—where is Hilda? Alas. Hilda is still looking out of the window. Passionate and dissatisfied as she was, she was a girl with an eye for houses. She often compared this old Mr. Skellorn with the villas she saw from her bedroom window. Therefore the villas must be described. Mr. Bennett proceeds:

"The row was called Freehold Villas: a consciously proud name in a district where much of the land was copyhold and could only change owners subject to the payment of 'fines,' and to the feudal consent of a 'court' presided over by the agent of a lord of the manor. Most of the dwellings were owned by their occupiers, who, each an absolute monarch of the soil, niggled in his sooty garden of an evening amid the flutter of drying shirts and towels. Freehold Villas symbolized the final triumph of Victorian economics, the apotheosis of the prudent and industrious artisan. It corresponded with a Building Society Secretary's dream of paradise. And indeed it was a very real achievement. Nevertheless, Hilda's irrational contempt would not admit this."

Heaven be praised, we cry! At last we are coming to Hilda herself. But not so fast. Hilda may have been this, that, and the other; but Hilda not only looked at houses, and thought of houses; Hilda lived in a house. And what sort of a house did Hilda live in? Mr. Bennett proceeds:

"It was one of the two middle houses of a detached terrace of four houses built by her grandfather Lessways, the teapot manufacturer; it was the chief of the four, obviously the habitation of the proprietor of the terrace. One of the corner houses comprised a grocer's shop, and this house had been robbed of its just proportion of garden so that the seigneurial garden-plot might be triflingly larger than the other. The terrace was not a terrace of cottages, but of houses rated at from twenty-six to thirty-six pounds a year; beyond the means of artisans and petty insurance agents and rent-collectors. And further, it was well-built, generously built; and its architecture, though debased, showed some faint traces of Georgian amenity. It was admittedly the best row

of houses in that newly settled quarter of the town. In coming to it out of Freehold Villas Mr. Skellorn obviously came to something superior, wider, more liberal. Suddenly Hilda heard her mother's voice."

But we cannot hear her mother's voice, or Hilda's voice; we can only hear Mr. Bennett's voice telling us facts about rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines. What can Mr. Bennett be about? I have formed my own opinion of what Mr. Bennett is about—he is trying to make us imagine for him; he is trying to hypnotize us into the belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person living there. With all his powers of observation, which are marvelous, with all his sympathy and humanity, which are great, Mr. Bennett has never once looked at Mrs. Brown in her corner. There she sits in the corner of the carriage—that carriage which is traveling, not from Richmond to Waterloo, but from one age of English literature to the next, for Mrs. Brown is eternal, Mrs. Brown is human nature, Mrs. Brown changes only on the surface, it is the novelists who get in and out—there she sits and not one of the Edwardian writers has so much as looked at her. They have looked very powerfully, searchingly, and sympathetically out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but never at her, never at life, never at human nature. And so they have developed a technique of novel-writing which suits their purpose; they have made tools and established conventions which do their business. But those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools are death.

You may well complain of the vagueness of my language. What is a convention, a tool, you may ask, and what do you mean by saying that Mr. Bennett's and Mr. Wells's and Mr. Galsworthy's conventions are the wrong conventions for the Georgians? The question is difficult: I will attempt a short cut. A convention in writing is not much different from a convention in manners. Both in life and in literature it is necessary to have some means of bridging the gulf between the hostess and her unknown guest on the one hand, the writer and his unknown reader on the other. The hostess bethinks her of the weather, for generations of hostesses have established the fact that this is a subject of universal interest in which we all believe. She begins by saying that we are having a wretched May, and, having thus got into touch with her unknown guest, proceeds to matters of greater interest. So it is in literature. The writer must get into touch with his reader by putting before him something which he recognizes, which therefore stimulates his imagination, and makes him willing to co-operate in the far more difficult business of intimacy. And it is of the highest importance that this common meeting-place should be reached easily, almost instinctively, in the dark, with one's eyes shut. Here is Mr. Bennett making use of this common ground in the passage which I have quoted. The problem before him was to make us believe in the reality of Hilda Lessways. So he began, being an Edwardian, by describing accurately and minutely the sort of house Hilda lived in, and the sort of house she saw from the window. House property was the common ground from which the Edwardians found it easy to proceed to intimacy. Indirect as it seems to us, the conven-

tion worked admirably, and thousands of Hilda Lessways were launched upon the world by this means. For that age and generation, the convention was a good one.

But now, if you will allow me to pull my own anecdote to pieces, you will see how keenly I felt the lack of a convention, and how serious a matter it is when the tools of one generation are useless for the next. The incident had made a great impression on me. But how was I to transmit it to you? All I could do was to report as accurately as I could what was said, to describe in detail what was worn, to say, despairingly, that all sorts of scenes rushed into my mind, to proceed to tumble them out pell-mell, and to describe this vivid, this overmastering impression by likening it to a draught or a smell of burning. To tell you the truth, I was also strongly tempted to manufacture a three-volume novel about the old lady's son, and his adventures crossing the Atlantic, and her daughter, and how she kept a milliner's shop in Westminster, the past life of Smith himself, and his house at Sheffield, though such stories seem to me the most dreary, irrelevant, and humbugging affairs in the world.

But if I had done that I should have escaped the appalling effort of saying what I meant. And to have got at what I meant I should have had to go back and back and back; to experiment with one thing and another; to try this sentence and that, referring each word to my vision, matching it as exactly as possible, and knowing that somehow I had to find a common ground between us, a convention which would not seem to you too odd, unreal, and far-fetched to believe in. I admit that I shirked that arduous undertaking. I let my Mrs. Brown slip through my fingers. I have told you nothing whatever about her. But that is partly the great Edwardians' fault. I asked them—they are my elders and betters—How shall I begin to describe this woman's character? And they said: "Begin by saying that her father kept a shop in Harrogate. Ascertain the rent. Ascertain the wages of shop assistants in the year 1878. Discover what her mother died of. Describe cancer. Describe calico. Describe—" But I cried: "Stop! Stop!" And I regret to say that I threw that ugly, that clumsy, that incongruous tool out of the window, for I knew that if I began describing the cancer and the calico, my Mrs. Brown, that vision to which I cling though I know no way of imparting it to you, would have been dulled and tarnished and vanished for ever.

That is what I mean by saying that the Edwardian tools are the wrong ones for us to use. They have laid an enormous stress upon the fabric of things. They have given us a house in the hope that we may be able to deduce the human beings who live there. To give them their due, they have made that house much better worth living in. But if you hold that novels are in the first place about people, and only in the second about the houses they live in, that is the wrong way to set about it. Therefore, you see, the Georgian writer had to begin by throwing away the method that was in use at the moment. He was left alone there facing Mrs. Brown without any method of conveying her to the reader. But that is inaccurate. A writer is never alone. There is always the public with him—if not on the same seat, at least in the compartment next door. Now the public is a strange traveling companion. In England it is a very suggestible and docile creature, which, once you get it to attend, will believe

implicitly what it is told for a certain number of years. If you say to the public with sufficient conviction: "All women have tails, and all men humps," it will actually learn to see women with tails and men with humps, and will think it very revolutionary and probably improper if you say: "Nonsense. Monkeys have tails and camels humps. But men and women have brains, and they have hearts; they think and they feel,"—that will seem to it a bad joke, and an improper one into the bargain.

But to return. Here is the British public sitting by the writer's side and saying in its vast and unanimous way: "Old women have houses. They have fathers. They have incomes. They have servants. They have hot-water bottles. That is how we know that they are old women. Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett and Mr. Galsworthy have always taught us that this is the way to recognize them. But now with your Mrs. Brown—how are we to believe in her? We do not even know whether her villa was called Albert or Balmoral; what she paid for her gloves; or whether her mother died of cancer or of consumption. How can she be alive? No; she is a mere figment of your imagination."

And old women of course ought to be made of freehold villas and copyhold estates, not of imagination.

The Georgian novelist, therefore, was in an awkward predicament. There was Mrs. Brown protesting that she was different, quite different, from what people made out, and luring the novelist to her rescue by the most fascinating if fleeting glimpse of her charms; there were the Edwardians handing out tools appropriate to house building and house breaking; and there was the British public asseverating that they must see the hot-water bottle first. Meanwhile the train was rushing to that station where we must all get out.

Such, I think, was the predicament in which the young Georgians found themselves about the year 1910. Many of them—I am thinking of Mr. Forster and Mr. Lawrence in particular—spoilt their early work because, instead of throwing away those tools, they tried to use them. They tried to compromise. They tried to combine their own direct sense of the oddity and significance of some character with Mr. Galsworthy's knowledge of the Factory Acts, and Mr. Bennett's knowledge of the Five Towns. They tried it, but they had too keen, too overpowering a sense of Mrs. Brown and her peculiarities to go on trying it much longer. Something had to be done. At whatever cost of life, limb, and damage to valuable property Mrs. Brown must be rescued, expressed, and set in her high relations to the world before the train stopped and she disappeared for ever. And so the smashing and the crashing began. Thus it is that we hear all round us, in poems and novels and biographies, even in newspaper articles and essays, the sound of breaking and falling, crashing and destruction. It is the prevailing sound of the Georgian age—rather a melancholy one if you think what melodious days there have been in the past, if you think of Shakespeare and Milton and Keats or even of Jane Austen and Thackeray and Dickens; if you think of the language, and the heights to which it can soar when free, and see the same eagle captive, bald, and croaking.

In view of these facts—with these sounds in my ears and these fancies in my brain—I am not going to deny that Mr. Bennett has some reason when he complains that our Georgian writers are unable to make us believe that our

characters are real. I am forced to agree that they do not pour out three immortal masterpieces with Victorian regularity every autumn. But, instead of being gloomy, I am sanguine. For this state of things is, I think, inevitable whenever from hoar old age or callow youth the convention ceases to be a means of communication between writer and reader, and becomes instead an obstacle and an impediment. At the present moment we are suffering, not from decay, but from having no code of manners which writers and readers accept as a prelude to the more exciting intercourse of friendship. The literary convention of the time is so artificial—you have to talk about the weather and nothing but the weather throughout the entire visit—that, naturally, the feeble are tempted to outrage, and the strong are led to destroy the very foundations and rules of literary society. Signs of this are everywhere apparent. Grammar is violated; syntax disintegrated; as a boy staying with an aunt for the week-end rolls in the geranium bed out of sheer desperation as the solemnities of the sabbath wear on. The more adult writers do not, of course, indulge in such wanton exhibitions of spleen. Their sincerity is desperate, and their courage tremendous; it is only that they do not know which to use, a fork or their fingers. Thus, if you read Mr. Joyce and Mr. Eliot you will be struck by the indecency of the one, and the obscurity of the other. Mr. Joyce's indecency in *Ulysses* seems to me the conscious and calculated indecency of a desperate man who feels that in order to breathe he must break the windows. At moments, when the window is broken, he is magnificent. But what a waste of energy! And, after all, how dull indecency is, when it is not the overflowing of a superabundant energy or savagery, but the determined and public-spirited act of a man who needs fresh air! Again, with the obscurity of Mr. Eliot. I think that Mr. Eliot has written some of the loveliest single lines in modern poetry. But how intolerant he is of the old usages and politenesses of society—respect for the weak, consideration for the dull! As I sun myself upon the intense and ravishing beauty of one of his lines, and reflect that I must make a dizzy and dangerous leap to the next, and so on from line to line, like an acrobat flying precariously from bar to bar, I cry out, I confess, for the old decorums, and envy the indolence of my ancestors who, instead of spinning madly through mid-air, dreamt quietly in the shade with a book. Again, in Mr. Strachey's books, *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria,* the effort and strain of writing against the grain and current of the times is visible too. It is much less visible, of course, for not only is he dealing with facts, which are stubborn things, but he has fabricated, chiefly from eighteenth-century material, a very discreet code of manners of his own, which allows him to sit at table with the highest in the land and to say a great many things under cover of that exquisite apparel which, had they gone naked, would have been chased by the men-servants from the room. Still, if you compare *Eminent Victorians* with some of Lord Macaulay's essays, though you will feel that Lord Macaulay is always wrong, and Mr. Strachey always right, you will also feel a body, a sweep, a richness in Lord Macaulay's essays which show that his age was behind him; all his strength went straight into his work; none was used for purposes of concealment or of conversion. But Mr. Strachey has had to open our eyes before he

made us see; he has had to search out and sew together a very artful manner of speech; and the effort, beautifully though it is concealed, has robbed his work of some of the force that should have gone into it, and limited his scope.

For these reasons, then, we must reconcile ourselves to a season of failures and fragments. We must reflect that where so much strength is spent on finding a way of telling the truth, the truth itself is bound to reach us in rather an exhausted and chaotic condition. Ulysses, Queen Victoria, Mr. Prufrock—to give Mrs. Brown some of the names she has made famous lately—is a little pale and disheveled by the time her rescuers reach her. And it is the sound of their axes that we hear—a vigorous and stimulating sound in my ears—unless of course you wish to sleep, when, in the bounty of his concern, Providence has provided a host of writers anxious and able to satisfy your needs.

Thus I have tried, at tedious length, I fear, to answer some of the questions which I began by asking. I have given an account of some of the difficulties which in my view beset the Georgian writer in all his forms. I have sought to excuse him. May I end by venturing to remind you of the duties and responsibilities that are yours as partners in this business of writing books, as companions in the railway carriage, as fellow travelers with Mrs. Brown? For she is just as visible to you who remain silent as to us who tell stories about her. In the course of your daily life this past week you have had far stranger and more interesting experiences than the one I have tried to describe. You have overheard scraps of talk that filled you with amazement. You have gone to bed at night bewildered by the complexity of your feelings. In one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder. Nevertheless, you allow the writers to palm off upon you a version of all this, an image of Mrs. Brown, which has no likeness to that surprising apparition whatsoever. In your modesty you seem to consider that writers are different blood and bone from yourselves; that they know more of Mrs. Brown than you do. Never was there a more fatal mistake. It is this division between reader and writer, this humility on your part, these professional airs and graces on ours, that corrupt and emasculate the books which should be the healthy offspring of a close and equal alliance between us. Hence spring those sleek, smooth novels, those portentous and ridiculous biographies, that milk and watery criticism, those poems melodiously celebrating the innocence of roses and sheep which pass so plausibly for literature at the present time.

Your part is to insist that writers shall come down off their plinths and pedestals, and describe beautifully if possible, truthfully at any rate, our Mrs. Brown. You should insist that she is an old lady of unlimited capacity and infinite variety; capable of appearing in any place; wearing any dress; saying anything and doing heaven knows what. But the things she says and the things she does and her eyes and her nose and her speech and her silence have an overwhelming fascination, for she is, of course, the spirit we live by, life itself.

But do not expect just at present a complete and satisfactory presentment of her. Tolerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure. Your help is invoked in a good cause. For I will make one final and surpassingly

rash prediction—we are trembling on the verge of one of the great ages of English literature. But it can only be reached if we are determined never, never to desert Mrs. Brown.

Notes

1. Written April 1919.
2. A paper read to the Heretics, Cambridge, on May 18, 1924.

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Georg Lukács

From Realism in Our Time: Literature and the Class Struggle

The Ideology of Modernism

It is in no way surprising that the most influential contemporary school of writing should still be committed to the dogmas of "modernist" anti-realism. It is here that we must begin our investigation if we are to chart the possibilities of a bourgeois realism. We must compare the two main trends in contemporary bourgeois literature, and look at the answers they give to the major ideological and artistic questions of our time.

We shall concentrate on the underlying ideological basis of these trends (ideological in the above-defined, not in the strictly philosophical, sense). What must be avoided at all costs is the approach generally adopted by bourgeois-modernist critics themselves: that exaggerated concern with formal criteria, with questions of style and literary technique. This approach may appear to distinguish sharply between "modern" and "traditional" writing (i.e., contemporary writers who adhere to the styles of the last century). In fact it fails to locate the decisive formal problems and turns a blind eye to their inherent dialectic. We are presented with a false polarization which, by exaggerating the importance of stylistic differences, conceals the opposing principles actually underlying and determining contrasting styles.

To take an example: the *monologue intérieur.* Compare, for instance, Bloom's monologue in the lavatory or Molly's monologue in bed, at the beginning and at the end of *Ulysses,* with Goethe's early-morning monologue as conceived by Thomas Mann in his *Lotte in Weimar.* Plainly, the same stylistic technique is being employed. And certain of Thomas Mann's remarks about Joyce and his methods would appear to confirm this.

Yet it is not easy to think of any two novels more basically dissimilar than *Ulysses* and *Lotte in Weimar.* This is true even of the superficially rather similar scenes I have indicated. I am not referring to the—to my mind—striking difference in intellectual quality. I refer to the fact that with Joyce the stream-of-consciousness technique is no mere stylistic device; it is itself the formative principle governing the narrative pattern and the presentation of character. Technique here is something absolute; it is part and parcel of the aesthetic ambition informing *Ulysses.* With Thomas Mann, on the other hand, the

monologue intérieur is simply a technical device, allowing the author to explore aspects of Goethe's world which would not have been otherwise available. Goethe's experience is not presented as confined to momentary sense-impressions. The artist reaches down to the core of Goethe's personality, to the complexity of his relations with his own past, present, and even future experience. The stream of association is only apparently free. The monologue is composed with the utmost artistic rigor: it is a carefully plotted sequence gradually piercing to the core of Goethe's personality. Every person or event, emerging momentarily from the stream and vanishing again, is given a specific weight, a definite position, in the pattern of the whole. However unconventional the presentation, the compositional principle is that of the traditional epic; in the way the pace is controlled, and the transitions and climaxes are organized, the ancient rules of epic narration are faithfully observed.

It would be absurd, in view of Joyce's artistic ambitions and his manifest abilities, to qualify the exaggerated attention he gives to the detailed recording of sense-data, and his comparative neglect of ideas and emotions, as artistic failure. All this was in conformity with Joyce's artistic intentions; and, by use of such techniques, he may be said to have achieved them satisfactorily. But between Joyce's intentions and those of Thomas Mann there is a total opposition. The perpetually oscillating patterns of sense- and memory-data, their powerfully charged—but aimless and directionless—fields of force, give rise to an epic structure which is *static,* reflecting a belief in the basically static character of events.

These opposed views of the world—dynamic and developmental on the one hand, static and sensational on the other—are of crucial importance in examining the two schools of literature I have mentioned. I shall return to the opposition later. Here, I want only to point out that an exclusive emphasis on formal matters can lead to serious misunderstanding of the character of an artist's work.

What determines the style of a given work of art? How does the intention determine the form? (We are concerned here, of course, with the intention realized in the work; it need not coincide with the writer's conscious intention.) The distinctions that concern us are not those between stylistic "techniques" in the formalistic sense. It is the view of the world, the ideology or *weltanschauung* underlying a writer's work, that counts. And it is the writer's attempt to reproduce this view of the world which constitutes his "intention" and is the formative principle underlying the style of a given piece of writing. Looked at in this way, style ceases to be a formalistic category. Rather, it is rooted in content; it is the specific form of a specific content.

Content determines form. But there is no content of which Man himself is not the focal point. However various the *données* of literature (a particular experience, a didactic purpose), the basic question is, and will remain: what is Man?

Here is a point of division: if we put the question in abstract, philosophical terms, leaving aside all formal considerations, we arrive—for the realist school—at the traditional Aristotelian dictum (which was also reached by other than purely aesthetic considerations): Man is *zoon politikon,* a social ani-

mal. The Aristotelian dictum is applicable to all great realistic literature. Achilles and Werther, Oedipus and Tom Jones, Antigone and Anna Karenina: their individual existence—their *Sein an sich,* in the Hegelian terminology; their "ontological being," as a more fashionable terminology has it—cannot be distinguished from their social and historical environment. Their human significance, their specific individuality cannot be separated from the context in which they were created.

The ontological view governing the image of man in the work of leading modernist writers is the exact opposite of this. Man, for these writers, is by nature solitary, asocial, unable to enter into relationships with other human beings. Thomas Wolfe once wrote: "My view of the world is based on the firm conviction that solitariness is by no means a rare condition, something peculiar to myself or to a few specially solitary human beings, but the inescapable, central fact of human existence." Man, thus imagined, may establish contact with other individuals, but only in a superficial, accidental manner; only, ontologically speaking, by retrospective reflection. For "the others," too, are basically solitary, beyond significant human relationship.

This basic solitariness of man must not be confused with that individual solitariness to be found in the literature of traditional realism. In the latter case, we are dealing with a particular situation in which a human being may be placed, due either to his character or to the circumstances of his life. Solitariness may be objectively conditioned, as with Sophocles' Philoctetes, put ashore on the bleak island of Lemnos. Or it may be subjective, the product of inner necessity, as with Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyitsch or Flaubert's Frédéric Moreau in the *Education Sentimentale.* But it is always merely a fragment, a phase, a climax or anti-climax, in the life of the community as a whole. The fate of such individuals is characteristic of certain human types in specific social or historical circumstances. Beside and beyond their solitariness, the common life, the strife and togetherness of other human beings, goes on as before. In a word, their solitariness is a specific social fate, not a universal *condition humaine.*

The latter, of course, is characteristic of the theory and practice of modernism. I would like, in the present study, to spare the reader tedious excursions into philosophy. But I cannot refrain from drawing the reader's attention to Heidegger's description of human existence as a "thrownness-into-being" (*Geworfenheit ins Dasein*). A more graphic evocation of the ontological solitariness of the individual would be hard to imagine. Man is "thrown-into-being." This implies, not merely that man is constitutionally unable to establish relationships with things or persons outside himself; but also that it is impossible to determine theoretically the origin and goal of human existence.

Man, thus conceived, is an ahistorical being. (The fact that Heidegger does admit a form of "authentic" historicity in his system is not really relevant. I have shown elsewhere that Heidegger tends to belittle historicity as "vulgar"; and his "authentic" historicity is not distinguishable from ahistoricity.) This negation of history takes two different forms in modernist literature. First, the hero is strictly confined within the limits of his own experience. There is not for him—and apparently not for his creator—any pre-existent reality beyond his own self, acting upon him or being acted upon by him. Secondly, the hero

himself is without personal history. He is "thrown-into-the-world": meaninglessly, unfathomably. He does not develop through contact with the world; he neither forms nor is formed by it. The only "development" in this literature is the gradual revelation of the human condition. Man is now what he has always been and always will be. The narrator, the examining subject, is in motion; the examined reality is static.

Of course, dogmas of this kind are only really viable in philosophical abstraction, and then only with a measure of sophistry. A gifted writer, however extreme his theoretical modernism, will in practice have to compromise with the demands of historicity and of social environment. Joyce uses Dublin, Kafka and Musil the Hapsburg Monarchy, as the locus of their masterpieces. But the locus they lovingly depict is little more than a backcloth; it is not basic to their artistic intention.

This view of human existence has specific literary consequences. Particularly in one category, of primary theoretical and practical importance, to which we must now give our attention: that of *potentiality.* Philosophy distinguishes between *abstract* and *concrete* (in Hegel, "real") *potentiality.* These two categories, their interrelation and opposition, are rooted in life itself. *Potentiality*—seen abstractly or subjectively—is richer than actual life. Innumerable possibilities for man's development are imaginable, only a small percentage of which will be realized. Modern subjectivism, taking these imagined possibilities for actual complexity of life, oscillates between melancholy and fascination. When the world declines to realize these possibilities, this melancholy becomes tinged with contempt. Hofmannsthal's Sobeide expressed the reaction of the generation first exposed to this experience:

> The burden of those endlessly pored-over
> And now forever perished possibilities . . .

How far were those possibilities even concrete or "real"? Plainly, they existed only in the imagination of the subject, as dreams or day-dreams. Faulkner, in whose work this subjective potentiality plays an important part, was evidently aware that reality must thereby be subjectivized and made to appear arbitrary. Consider this comment of his: "They were all talking simultaneously, getting flushed and excited, quarrelling, making the unreal into a possibility, then into a probability, then into an irrefutable fact, as human beings do when they put their wishes into words." The possibilities in a man's mind, the particular pattern, intensity and suggestiveness they assume, will of course be characteristic of that individual. In practice, their number will border on the infinite, even with the most unimaginative individual. It is thus a hopeless undertaking to define the contours of individuality, let alone to come to grips with a man's actual fate, by means of potentiality. The *abstract* character of potentiality is clear from the fact that it cannot determine development—subjective mental states, however permanent or profound, cannot here be decisive. Rather, the development of personality is determined by inherited gifts and qualities; by the factors, external or internal, which further or inhibit their growth.

But in life potentiality can, of course, become reality. Situations arise in which a man is confronted with a choice; and in the act of choice a man's

character may reveal itself in a light that surprises even himself. In literature—and particularly in dramatic literature—the denouement often consists in the realization of just such a potentiality, which circumstances have kept from coming to the fore. These potentialities are, then, "real" or concrete potentialities. The fate of the character depends upon the potentiality in question, even if it should condemn him to a tragic end. In advance, while still a subjective potentiality in the character's mind, there is no way of distinguishing it from the innumerable abstract potentialities in his mind. It may even be buried away so completely that, before the moment of decision, it has never entered his mind even as an abstract potentiality. The subject, after taking his decision, may be unconscious of his own motives. Thus Richard Dudgeon, Shaw's Devil's Disciple, having sacrificed himself as Pastor Andersen, confesses: "I have often asked myself for the motive, but I find no good reason to explain why I acted as I did."

Yet it is a decision which has altered the direction of his life. Of course, this is an extreme case. But the qualitative leap of the denouement, canceling and at the same time renewing the continuity of individual consciousness, can never be predicted. The concrete potentiality cannot be isolated from the myriad abstract potentialities. Only actual decision reveals the distinction.

The literature of realism, aiming at a truthful reflection of reality, must demonstrate both the concrete and abstract potentialities of human beings in extreme situations of this kind. A character's concrete potentiality once revealed, his abstract potentialities will appear essentially inauthentic. Moravia, for instance, in his novel *The Indifferent Ones,* describes the young son of a decadent bourgeois family, Michel, who makes up his mind to kill his sister's seducer. While Michel, having made his decision, is planning the murder, a large number of abstract—but highly suggestive—possibilities are laid before us. Unfortunately for Michel the murder is actually carried out; and, from the sordid details of the action, Michel's character emerges as what it is—representative of that background from which, in subjective fantasy, he had imagined he could escape.

Abstract potentiality belongs wholly to the realm of subjectivity; whereas concrete potentiality is concerned with the dialectic between the individual's subjectivity and objective reality. The literary presentation of the latter thus implies a description of actual persons inhabiting a palpable, identifiable world. Only in the interaction of character and environment can the concrete potentiality of a particular individual be singled out from the "bad infinity" of purely abstract potentialities, and emerge as the determining potentiality of just this individual at just this phase of his development. This principle alone enables the artist to distinguish concrete potentiality from a myriad abstractions.

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A typology limited in this way to the *homme moyen sensuel* and the idiot also opens the door to "experimental" stylistic distortion. Distortion becomes as inseparable a part of the portrayal of reality as the recourse to the pathological. But literature must have a concept of the normal if it is to "place" distortion correctly; that is to say, to see it *as* distortion. With such a typology this placing

is impossible, since the normal is no longer a proper object of literary interest. Life under capitalism is, often rightly, presented as a distortion (a petrification or paralysis) of the human substance. But to present psychopathology as a way of escape from this distortion is itself a distortion. We are invited to measure one type of distortion against another and arrive, necessarily, at universal distortion. There is no principle to set against the general pattern, no standard by which the petty-bourgeois and the pathological can be seen in their social context. And these tendencies, far from being relativized with time, become ever more absolute. Distortion becomes the normal condition of human existence; the proper study, the formative principle, of art and literature.

I have demonstrated some of the literary implications of this ideology. Let us now pursue the argument further. It is clear, I think, that modernism must deprive literature of a sense of *perspective.* This would not be surprising; rigorous modernists such as Kafka, Benn, and Musil have always indignantly refused to provide their readers with any such thing. I will return to the ideological implications of the idea of perspective later. Let me say here that, in any work of art, perspective is of overriding importance. It determines the course and content; it draws together the threads of the narration; it enables the artist to choose between the important and the superficial, the crucial and the episodic. The direction in which characters develop is determined by perspective, only those features being described which are material to their development. The more lucid the perspective—as in Molière or the Greeks—the more economical and striking the selection.

Modernism drops this selective principle. It asserts that it can dispense with it, or can replace it with its dogma of the *condition humaine.* A naturalistic style is bound to be the result. This state of affairs—which to my mind characterizes all modernist art of the past fifty years—is disguised by critics who systematically glorify the modernist movement. By concentrating on formal criteria, by isolating technique from content and exaggerating its importance, these critics refrain from judgment on the social or artistic significance of subject-matter. They are unable, in consequence, to make the aesthetic distinction between *realism* and *naturalism.* This distinction depends on the presence or absence in a work of art of a "hierarchy of significance" in the situations and characters presented. Compared with this, formal categories are of secondary importance. That is why it is possible to speak of the basically *naturalistic* character of modernist literature—and to see here the literary expression of an ideological continuity. This is not to deny that variations in style reflect changes in society. But the particular form this principle of naturalistic arbitrariness, this lack of hierarchic structure, may take is not decisive. We encounter it in the all-determining "social conditions" of Naturalism, in Symbolism's impressionist methods and its cultivation of the exotic, in the fragmentation of objective reality in Futurism and Constructivism and the German *Neue Sachlichkeit,* or, again, in Surrealism's stream of consciousness.

These schools have in common a basically static approach to reality. This is closely related to their lack of perspective. Characteristically, Gottfried Benn actually incorporated this in his artistic program. One of his volumes bears the

title, *Static Poems.* The denial of history, of development, and thus of perspective, becomes the mark of true insight into the nature of reality.

> The wise man is ignorant
> of change and development
> his children and children's children
> are no part of his world.

The rejection of any concept of the future is for Benn the criterion of wisdom. But even those modernist writers who are less extreme in their rejection of history tend to present social and historical phenomena as static. It is, then, of small importance whether this condition is "eternal," or only a transitional stage punctuated by sudden catastrophes (even in early Naturalism the static presentation was often broken up by these catastrophes, without altering its basic character). Musil, for instance, writes in his essay, *The Writer in Our Age:* "One knows just as little about the present. Partly, this is because we are, as always, too close to the present. But it is also because the present into which we were plunged some two decades ago is of a particularly all-embracing and inescapable character." Whether or not Musil knew of Heidegger's philosophy, the idea of *Geworfenheit* is clearly at work here. And the following reveals plainly how, for Musil, this static state was upset by the catastrophe of 1914: "All of a sudden, the world was full of violence. . . . In European civilization, there was a sudden rift." In short: this static apprehension of reality in modernist literature is no passing fashion; it is rooted in the ideology of modernism.

To establish the basic distinction between modernism and that realism which, from Homer to Thomas Mann and Gorky, has assumed change and development to be the proper subject of literature, we must go deeper into the underlying ideological problem. In *The House of the Dead* Dostoevsky gave an interesting account of the convict's attitude to work. He described how the prisoners, in spite of brutal discipline, loafed about, working badly or merely going through the motions of work until a new overseer arrived and allotted them a new project, after which they were allowed to go home. "The work was hard," Dostoevsky continues, "but, Christ, with what energy they threw themselves into it! Gone was all their former indolence and pretended incompetence." Later in the book Dostoevsky sums up his experiences: "If a man loses hope and has no aim in view, sheer boredom can turn him into a beast." I have said that the problem of perspective in literature is directly related to the principle of selection. Let me go further: underlying the problem is a profound ethical complex, reflected in the composition of the work itself. Every human action is based on a presupposition of its inherent meaningfulness, at least to the subject. Absence of meaning makes a mockery of action and reduces art to naturalistic description.

Clearly, there can be no literature without at least the appearance of change or development. This conclusion should not be interpreted in a narrowly metaphysical sense. We have already diagnosed the obsession with psychopathology in modernist literature as a desire to escape from the reality of

capitalism. But this implies the absolute primacy of the *terminus a quo,* the condition from which it is desired to escape. Any movement towards a *terminus ad quem* is condemned to impotence. As the ideology of most modernist writers asserts the unalterability of outward reality (even if this is reduced to a mere state of consciousness) human activity is, a priori, rendered impotent and robbed of meaning.

The apprehension of reality to which this leads is most consistently and convincingly realized in the work of Kafka. Kafka remarks of Josef K., as he is being led to execution: "He thought of flies, their tiny limbs breaking as they struggle away from the fly-paper." This mood of total impotence, of paralysis in the face of the unintelligible power of circumstances, informs all his work. Though the action of *The Castle* takes a different, even an opposite, direction to that of *The Trial,* this view of the world, from the perspective of a trapped and struggling fly, is all-pervasive. This experience, this vision of a world dominated by *angst* and of man at the mercy of incomprehensible terrors, makes Kafka's work the very type of modernist art. Techniques, elsewhere of merely formal significance, are used here to evoke a primitive awe in the presence of an utterly strange and hostile reality. Kafka's *angst* is the experience *par excellence* of modernism.

Two instances from musical criticism—which can afford to be both franker and more theoretical than literary criticism—show that it is indeed a universal experience with which we are dealing. The composer Hanns Eisler, says of Schönberg: "Long before the invention of the bomber, he expressed what people were to feel in the air raid shelters." Even more characteristic—though seen from a modernist point of view—is Theodor W. Adorno's analysis (in *The Ageing of Modern Music*) of symptoms of decadence in modernist music: "The sounds are still the same. But the experience of *angst,* which made their originals great, has vanished." Modernist music, he continues, has lost touch with the truth that was its raison d'être. Composers are no longer equal to the emotional presuppositions of their modernism. And that is why modernist music has failed. The diminution of the original *angst*-obsessed vision of life (whether due, as Adorno thinks, to inability to respond to the magnitude of the horror or, as I believe, to the fact that this obsession with *angst* among bourgeois intellectuals has already begun to recede) has brought about a loss of substance in modern music, and destroyed its authenticity as a modernist art-form.

This is a shrewd analysis of the paradoxical situation of the modernist artist, particularly where he is trying to express deep and genuine experience. The deeper the experience, the greater the damage to the artistic whole. But this tendency toward disintegration, this loss of artistic unity, cannot be written off as a mere fashion, the product of experimental gimmicks. Modern philosophy, after all, encountered these problems long before modern literature, painting or music. A case in point is the problem of *time.* Subjective Idealism had already separated time, abstractly conceived, from historical change and particularity of place. As if this separation were insufficient for the new age of imperialism, Bergson widened it further. Experienced time, subjective time,

now became identical with real time; the rift between this time and that of the objective world was complete. Bergson and other philosophers who took up and varied this theme claimed that their concept of time alone afforded insight into authentic, i.e., subjective, reality. The same tendency soon made its appearance in literature.

The German left-wing critic and essayist of the twenties, Walter Benjamin, has well described Proust's vision and the techniques he uses to present it in his great novel: "We all know that Proust does not describe a man's life as it actually happens, but as it is remembered by a man who has lived through it. Yet this puts it far too crudely. For it is not actual experience that is important, but the texture of reminiscence, the Penelope's tapestry of a man's memory." The connection with Bergson's theories of time is obvious. But whereas with Bergson, in the abstraction of philosophy, the unity of perception is preserved, Benjamin shows that with Proust, as a result of the radical disintegration of the time sequence, objectivity is eliminated: "A lived event is finite, concluded at least on the level of experience. But a remembered event is infinite, a possible key to everything that preceded it and to everything that will follow it."

It is the distinction between a philosophical and an artistic vision of the world. However hard philosophy, under the influence of Idealism, tries to liberate the concepts of space and time from temporal and spatial particularity, literature continues to assume their unity. The fact that, nevertheless, the concept of subjective time cropped up in literature only shows how deeply subjectivism is rooted in the experience of the modern bourgeois intellectual. The individual, retreating into himself in despair at the cruelty of the age, may experience an intoxicated fascination with his forlorn condition. But then a new horror breaks through. If reality cannot be understood (or no effort is made to understand it), then the individual's subjectivity—alone in the universe, reflecting only itself—takes on an equally incomprehensible and horrific character. Hugo von Hofmannsthal was to experience this condition very early in his poetic career:

> It is a thing that no man cares to think on,
> And far too terrible for mere complaint,
> That all things slip from us and pass away,
>
> And that my ego, bound by no outward force—
> Once a small child's before it became mine—
> Should now be strange to me, like a strange dog.

By separating time from the outer world of objective reality, the inner world of the subject is transformed into a sinister, inexplicable flux and acquires—paradoxically, as it may seem—a static character.

On literature this tendency toward disintegration, of course, will have an even greater impact than on philosophy. When time is isolated in this way, the artist's world disintegrates into a multiplicity of partial worlds. The static view of the world, now combined with diminished objectivity, here rules un-

challenged. The world of man—the only subject-matter of literature—is shattered if a single component is removed. I have shown the consequences of isolating time and reducing it to a subjective category. But time is by no means the only component whose removal can lead to such disintegration. Here, again, Hofmannsthal anticipated later developments. His imaginary "Lord Chandos" reflects: "I have lost the ability to concentrate my thoughts or set them out coherently." The result is a condition of apathy, punctuated by manic fits. The development toward a definitely pathological protest is here anticipated—admittedly in glamorous, romantic guise. But it is the same disintegration that is at work.

Previous realistic literature, however violent its criticism of reality, had always assumed the unity of the world it described and seen it as a living whole inseparable from man himself. But the major realists of our time deliberately introduce elements of disintegration into their work—for instance, the subjectivizing of time—and use them to portray the contemporary world more exactly. In this way, the once natural unity becomes a conscious, constructed unity (I have shown elsewhere that the device of the two temporal planes in Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* serves to emphasize its historicity). But in modernist literature the disintegration of the world of man—and consequently the disintegration of personality—coincides with the ideological intention. Thus *angst,* this basic modern experience, this by-product of *Geworfenheit,* has its emotional origin in the experience of a disintegrating society. But it attains its effects by evoking the disintegration of the world of man.

To complete our examination of modernist literature, we must consider for a moment the question of allegory. Allegory is that aesthetic genre which lends itself par excellence to a description of man's alienation from objective reality. Allegory is a problematic genre because it rejects that assumption of an immanent meaning to human existence which—however unconscious, however combined with religious concepts of transcendence—is the basis of traditional art. Thus in medieval art we observe a new secularity (in spite of the continued use of religious subjects) triumphing more and more, from the time of Giotto, over the allegorizing of an earlier period.

Certain reservations should be made at this point. First, we must distinguish between literature and the visual arts. In the latter, the limitations of allegory can be the more easily overcome in that transcendental, allegorical subjects can be clothed in an aesthetic immanence (even if of a merely decorative kind) and the rift in reality in some sense be eliminated—we have only to think of Byzantine mosaic art. This decorative element has no real equivalent in literature; it exists only in a figurative sense, and then only as a secondary component. Allegorical art of the quality of Byzantine mosaic is only rarely possible in literature. Secondly, we must bear in mind in examining allegory—and this is of great importance for our argument—a historical distinction: does the concept of transcendence in question contain within itself tendencies towards immanence (as in Byzantine art or Giotto), or is it the product precisely of a rejection of these tendencies?

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Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann?

Georg Lukács

To define the conditions in which bourgeois "literary" literature can flourish today, we analyzed the ideological basis and the main stylistic tendencies of the modern bourgeois anti-realistic movement. We might have widened our examination to include "non-literary" literature, if only to reveal its social basis. Certain of the phenomena we have discussed are to be found most strikingly in this latter literature. Take the cult of the abnormal, of the perverse: horror comics show that this cult is drawn directly from life. Or take the detective story. With Conan Doyle the genre was firmly grounded in a philosophy of security; it glorified the omniscience of those who watched over the stability of bourgeois life. Now the basic ingredients are fear and insecurity: at any moment terror may break through; only luck can avert it. In some works of a middle-brow kind (for example in Hayes' *On a Day Like Any Other*) this kind of "luck" provides—by way of apology for the society it portrays—the book's happy ending. Indeed, a main distinction between high-brow literature and the literature of entertainment is just this rejection of a compromise—though there is a modern variety of the thriller which deliberately exploits horror for its own purposes.

But we must return to our proper subject: to modernism, or rather to those modernist techniques so influential on the contemporary literary scene. We avoided the use of purely formal criteria in distinguishing between modernist and realist literature. Yet ideological criteria, though they underlie and mold literary expression, also represent no more than general tendencies. These may co-exist in one author, even in one work of art, with varying degrees of emphasis and self-consciousness. Indeed, if we refuse to follow those modernist critics who tell us that theirs is the only possible future literature, and trace the realist tendencies still existing within the anti-realistic movement, the literature of our time begins to resemble an extended battlefield. It is a battlefield where the champions of modern anti-realism, and the champions of what we have called "the revolt of humanism," noisily contend. What we are examining is not simply two typical literary movements of our time. We are examining a conflict between two basic tendencies, a conflict fought out, not only in one and the same writer, but often in one and the same poem, play, or novel.

The dividing line is often blurred, if only because all writing must contain a certain degree of realism. Indeed, there is a fundamental truth at stake here: realism is not one style among others, it is the basis of literature; all styles (even those seemingly most opposed to realism) originate in it or are significantly related to it. Schopenhauer's remark that a consistent solipsist could only be found in a lunatic asylum is applicable to consistent anti-realism. The inevitability of realism is most obvious, of course, where descriptive detail is concerned. We have only to think of Kafka, where the most improbable, fantastic statements appear real through force of descriptive detail. Without this realism in detail Kafka's evocation of the spectral nature of human existence would be no more than a sermon, not the inexorable nightmare it is. Realistic detail is a precondition for the communication of a sense of absurdity. We get,

in fact, not straightforward anti-realism, but a dialectical process in which realism of detail negates the reality described; everything is determined by it—the presentation, the structure, the coherence of the writing. Similar processes are at work elsewhere in other modernist literature. But the tension Kafka achieves by pushing his two poles to their extremes, and by the shock of his transitions, is lacking. In Musil, too, we find this tension, but it owes less to intensity of detail and is spread out over the whole extent of his novel. We encounter dialectical leaps from "documentary" (with regard to some of the characters the novel is a *roman à clef*) to intimations of timelessness—attempts to achieve that "ahistoric," "paradigmatic" ambience which Musil claimed for the work.

Of still greater importance is the fact that many—and not the least extreme—components of modernist literature (for instance, the problem of time) are not as far removed from contemporary life as it might seem. On the contrary, they reflect very well certain aspects of reality, certain contemporary characteristics and peculiarities (of a certain social class, at least). Even with the most abstruse anti-realistic writers, stylistic experiment is not the willful twisting of reality according to subjective whim: it is a consequence of conditions prevailing in the modern world. Modernist forms, like other literary forms, reflect social and historical realities—though in a distorted, and distorting, fashion.

The situation is immensely complicated; it is natural that in the private statements and public manifestoes of leading modernist writers the issues are often blurred. It is not enough to point to the protests against the suppression of "degenerate art" under Hitler. These protests proclaimed general freedom of literary expression, but they defended more specifically the writer's duty to describe reality as his artistic conscience dictates. Since truth was the enemy of Hitlerism, a protest against its persecution of "degenerate art" was at the same time a defense of realism.

The motives of the modernists' opposition to Stalinist dogmatism's rejection of "formalism" are likewise mixed. Defense of extreme modernism (including genuinely "formalistic" literature) goes hand in hand with a—justified—rejection of the dogmatists' over-simplifications about the subject-matter and style of realism, and of their tendency to suppress the contradictions existing in socialist society, their reduction of "socialist perspective" to childish "happy endings."

Attacks of this kind may cause the pendulum to swing to the other extreme. Seeing that dogmatism paralyzes originality, the modernist critic is tempted to contrast—an understandable, though objectively incorrect reaction—the "interesting" colorfulness of decadent art with the "grayness" of schematic social-realist pseudo-literature. In the process he is likely to dismiss the theory of socialist realism as an obstacle to artistic freedom. The significant aesthetic antagonism between realism and anti-realism is no longer considered worth discussing; the merits of socialist (and critical) realism are disregarded; and the deeply problematical nature of modernism itself is ignored. In this context, it is worth pointing out the schematism of so many of the most highly praised creations of modernism. Formal novelty, and an affected origi-

nality, often conceal a subjectivist dogmatism. Ernst Jünger and Gottfried Benn, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett are not, properly speaking, a whit less schematic than many social-realist writers.

More significant than such polemics—where often enough the adversary, rather than the object to be defended, seems to determine the course of the argument—are the utterances of those critical realists who had an interest in, and concern for, the formal experimentation of modernism, and expressed the conviction that they had many basic attitudes in common. The reason is not far to seek. Many of these experiments are, in effect, reflections of contemporary reality. If realistic writers sympathize with these experiments, and are stimulated thereby to widen the scope of realism, it is because they wish to find new means to deal with contemporary subject-matter. We have only to think of Thomas Mann's published opinions of Kafka, Joyce, or Gide.

However blurred in a particular work of art, these distinctions exist; and can often be traced in individual cases with some precision. They are, indeed, more than bare distinctions; they are often mutually exclusive contradictions. We have already pointed to examples of polarization of content and, as a consequence, of form in cases that appear superficially similar—the handling of the stream-of-consciousness technique in Joyce and Thomas Mann, and the apparently similar, though in fact diametrically opposed, treatment of time. And there is a reason for this outward convergence in spite of extreme inner divergence. While the modernist writer is uncritical toward many aspects of the modern world, his contemporary, the realist writer, can step back from these things and treat them with the necessary critical detachment. To take the problem of time: Thomas Mann's critical detachment is such that he is not in doubt about the subjective character of the modern experience of time. Yet he knows that this experience is typical only of a certain social class, which can best be portrayed by making use of this experience. The uncritical approach of modernist writers—and of some modern philosophers—reveals itself in their conviction that this subjective experience constitutes reality as such. That is why this treatment of time can be used by the realistic writer to characterize certain figures in his novels, although in a modernist work it may be used to describe reality itself. Again and again Thomas Mann places characters with a time-experience of this subjectivist kind in relation to characters whose experience of time is normal and objective. In *The Magic Mountain* Hans Castorp represents the former type; Joachim Ziemssen and Hofrat Behrens the latter. Ziemssen is aware that this experience of time may be a result of living in a sanatorium, hermetically sealed off from everyday life. We arrive, therefore, at an important distinction: the modernist writer identifies what is necessarily a subjective experience with reality as such, thus giving a distorted picture of reality as a whole (Virginia Woolf is an extreme example of this). The realist, with his critical detachment, places what is a significant, specifically modern experience in a wider context, giving it only the emphasis it deserves as part of a greater, objective whole.

The same distinction is valid with regard to descriptive detail. In isolation, descriptive detail may be a genuine enough reflection of reality—that is, if the writer in question has talent. But whether or not the sequence and

organization make for an adequate image of objective reality will depend on the writer's attitude toward reality as a whole. For this attitude determines the function which the individual detail is accorded in the context of the whole. If it is handled uncritically, the result may be an arbitrary naturalism, since the writer will not be able to distinguish between significant and irrelevant detail. Joyce, I think, is a case in point. Once again, the essentially *naturalistic* character of modernism comes to the fore.

The matter becomes more complex with Kafka. Kafka is one of the very few modernist writers whose attitude to detail is selective, not naturalistic. Formally, his treatment of detail is not dissimilar to that of a realist. The difference becomes apparent only when we examine his basic commitment, the principles determining the selection and sequence of detail. With Kafka these principles are his belief in a transcendental force (Nothingness); in his nihilistic allegories, therefore, the artistic unity is broken.

But the problem cannot be approached formalistically. There are great realistic writers in whose work immediate social and historical reality is transcended, where realism in detail is based on a belief in a supernatural world. Take E. T. A. Hoffmann, for example. In Hoffmann, realism in detail goes hand in hand with a belief in the spectral nature of reality. On closer inspection, though, the difference between his artistic aims and those of modernism is apparent. Hoffmann's world is—for all its fairytale, ghostly ambience—an accurate enough reflection of conditions in the Germany of his time, a country moving from a distorted feudal absolutism to a capitalism not less distorted. With Hoffmann the supernatural was a means of presenting the German situation in its totality, at a time when social conditions did not as yet allow a direct realistic description or, indeed, as yet reveal a typical pattern. The working out of a typology was much easier in more highly developed France—though even Balzac at times used methods developed by Hoffmann (*Melmoth Reconcilié*).

Kafka is more secular than Hoffmann. His ghosts belong to everyday bourgeois life; and, since this life itself is unreal, there is no need of supernatural ghosts *à la* Hoffmann. But the unity of the world is broken up, since an essentially subjective vision is identified with reality itself. The terror generated by the world of imperialist capitalism (anticipatory of its later fascist progeny), where human beings are degraded to mere objects—this fear, originally a subjective experience, becomes an objective entity. The reflection of a distortion becomes a distorted reflection. And though Kafka's artistic method differs from that of other modernist writers, the principle of presentation is the same: the world is an allegory of transcendent Nothingness. With Kafka's followers the differences grow smaller or disappear altogether. With Beckett, for example, who mixes Kafkaesque and Joycean motifs, a fully standardized nihilistic modernism is the end-product.

In rejecting a rigid distinction, and acknowledging that in many cases the distinction is blurred, I must not be taken to imply that no real opposition exists. On the contrary, only by this method can the conflict of tendencies be accurately assessed. To sum up our enquiry so far: similarity of technique does

not imply similarity of ideology; nor is the approval or rejection of certain techniques a pointer to a writer's basic aim.

But what is this basic aim? So far, we have dealt with the main components of modernism, tracing the central ideological position common to its various schools. In order to establish our distinction we must return to the question of *perspective.* First, we must show how perspective acts as a principle of selection, as the criterion by which a writer selects his detail and avoids the pitfalls of naturalism. Clearly, this problem faces every talented writer: literary talent implies an affection for the richness and diversity of life. How the individual writer imposes some kind of order on the profusion of sensuous impression is chiefly a biographical question. These two dialectically opposed, yet dialectically complementary, activities are basic to the formation of an individual style. And here the importance of perspective as the selective principle must be evident. Max Liebermann, the Berlin Impressionist, used to say: "To draw is to subtract." We might extend that aphorism: art is the selection of the essential and subtraction of the inessential.

In itself, this is too abstract a definition. If it is to be of practical use, we must enquire more deeply into the subjective principle guiding artistic selection, and investigate the convergence (or divergence) between the data selected by an individual writer and "artistic objectivity." The latter is clearly not a direct consequence of the former; the degree of sincerity, intensity and insight guiding artistic selection is no guarantee, let alone a criterion, of objectivity. Yet it would be wrong to see the two principles as ineluctably opposed. Certainly, there is a divergence between subjective aim and objective achievement. But it is not something abrupt and irrational, a distinction between two metaphysical entities. Rather, it is part of the dialectical process by which a creative subjectivity develops, and is expressive of that subjectivity's encounter with the world of its time (or, possibly, of its failure to come to terms with that world).

A writer's pattern of choice is a function of his personality. But personality is not in fact timeless and absolute, however it may appear to the individual consciousness. Talent and character may be innate; but the manner in which they develop, or fail to develop, depends on the writer's interaction with his environment, on his relationships with other human beings. His life is part of the life of his time; no matter whether he is conscious of this, approves of it or disapproves. He is part of a larger social and historical whole.

His own life is thus never constant or static; it is a process, a running battle between past, present and future. It is something which cannot be measured or understood until its stages have been experienced as a movement from and toward a certain goal. These stages and their dynamic interrelations are not purely subjective elements, to be accepted or rejected by the writer at his discretion. Life itself, the categories determining its nature and development, would be distorted if such factors were to be arbitrarily eliminated.

Up to this point, and within the framework of this rather abstract philosophical analysis, I may have the reader's approval. But a historical phenomenon is historical not only in this general sense; it is also a *concrete* element in a

specific historical process, in a concrete present linking a concrete past and future. It follows that everything in a writer's life, every individual experience, thought and emotion he undergoes, however subjective, partakes of a historical character. Every element in his life as a human being and as a writer is part of, and determined by, the movement from and toward some goal. Any authentic reflection of reality in literature must point to this movement. The method adopted will vary, of course, with the period and personality. But the selection and subtraction he undertakes in response to the teleological pattern of his own life constitutes the most intimate link between a writer's subjectivity and the outside world. We observe here a dialectical leap from the profound inwardness of subjectivity to the objectivity of social and historical reality.

In all this, *perspective* plays a decisive role. To understand its importance we must go into the distinction between objective reality and its artistic reflection rather more fully. It is a truism that the roots of the present are in the past, and the roots of the future in the present. Objectively, perspective points to the main movements in a given historical process. Subjectively—and not only in the field of artistic activity—it represents the capacity to grasp the existence and mode of action of these movements. If literature is to render an image of life that is adequate, formally convincing and consistent, the sequence must be reversed. Whereas in life "whither?" is a consequence of "whence?" in literature "whither?" determines the content, selection and proportion of the various elements. The finished work may resemble life in observing a causal sequence; but it would be no more than an arbitrary chronicle if there were not this reversal of direction. It is the perspective, the *terminus ad quem,* that determines the significance of each element in a work of art.

The creative role of perspective goes even further than this and touches on the creative act itself. It is not enough, however, to demonstrate the general connection between perspective and literary creativity. The concreteness of a writer's perspective, of course, is a decisive influence on the vitality and suggestive power of his art. It is decisive inasmuch as there is a connection—not direct, but complex and devious—between the structure of individual character and the degree to which perspective, in a work of art, can be realized. An *aesthetic* explanation of this connection has never been attempted; nor, I think, has the question ever been posed. In this place, we can do no more than enquire into one or two extreme examples. And this only in relation to our specific problem—to discover what perspective is favorable to the development of critical realism at the present day.

The following points seem to me worth making. First, there exists a somewhat abstract perspective, which makes use of the general features of an historical period, and can be employed in satire to work out typical characters and situations (Swift, Saltykov-Shchedrin). Clearly, typical situations will be technically easier to realize than characters which are individual and typical at the same time. Secondly, at the opposite extreme, there is the kind of perspective mainly concerned with day-to-day depiction of events, and which encourages the naturalistic description of individual or superficially typical features. The dialectic of historical development is labyrinthine; and, especially in regard to individual particularities, is not open to detached contemporary prediction.

Only "prophetic" vision, or subsequent study of a completed period, can grasp the unity underlying sharp contradictions. One would be misunderstanding the role of perspective in literature, though, if one were to identify "prophetic" understanding with correct political foresight. If such foresight were the criterion, there would have been no successful typology in nineteenth-century literature. For it was precisely the greatest writers of that age—Balzac and Stendhal, Dickens and Tolstoy—who erred most in their view of what the future would be like. Yet it was not accident that made possible the creation of typical, universal characters in their work.

Typology and perspective are thus related in a special way. The great realist writer is alone able to grasp and portray trends and phenomena truthfully in their historical development—"trends" not so much in the social and political field, as in that area where human behavior is molded and evaluated, where existing types are developed further and new types emerge. Men are changed by forces in their environment. But it is not only the character of individual human beings that changes. Greater emphasis is given at certain times to certain specific problems: some are pushed into the foreground, others eliminated; certain characteristics acquire a tragic aura, others, tragic in the past, are now reduced to comic dimensions. Such shifts of emphasis go on perpetually throughout history. Yet only the greatest realists are equipped to understand and portray their complexity.

A writer may grasp the authentic human problem (and thus the authentic social problem) of a particular phase in the historical process without consciously anticipating subsequent political and social developments. Here again, the question of perspective is relevant. For a typology can only be of lasting significance if the writer has depicted the central or peripheral significance, the comic or tragic characteristics of his types, in such a way that subsequent developments confirm his portrait of the age. (Balzac and Tolstoy have this kind of lasting significance; Ibsen, by way of contrast, has dated in many respects.) We see now that perspective is not to be confused with the capacity to predict historical events. Yet we also see why a perspective that sticks too closely to day-to-day events is rarely successful: concrete and determinate in matters which are of small interest to literature, it fails to produce adequate aesthetic solutions in more important matters. Lasting typologies, based on a perspective of this sort, owe their effectiveness not to the artist's understanding of day-to-day events, but to his unconscious possession of a perspective independent of, and reaching beyond, his understanding of the contemporary scene.

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A simple conclusion would appear to be available at this point. Is not the decisive distinction that between the presence of a socialist perspective in socialist realism, and its absence in decadent bourgeois literature?

The conclusion is tempting, but false. For the distinction I have in mind, the ideological and artistic implications of which I am concerned to analyze, is operative within bourgeois literature itself. The true opposition is not between socialist realism and bourgeois modernism but between bourgeois critical realism and bourgeois modernism. Not everyone who looks for a solution to the

social and ideological crisis of bourgeois society—and this is necessarily the subject-matter of contemporary bourgeois literature—will be a professed socialist. It is enough that a writer takes socialism into account and does not reject it out of hand. But if he rejects socialism—and this is the point I want to make—he closes his eyes to the future, gives up any chance of assessing the present correctly, and loses the ability to create other than purely static works of art.

Ideologically, this question has been central to bourgeois literature throughout the past century; indeed, it has become increasingly urgent. Let us look at some of its earlier appearances. A hundred years ago Heine wrote in a preface to the French edition of *Lutezia* that communism, though it was against his interests and his natural inclinations, had an attraction he found hard to resist. One reason for this attraction was communism's emphasis on logic and on justice. The unjust society he lived in stood condemned—even though the new society, as he put it, should use his *Buch der Lieder* as "wrapping paper for an old lady's coffee." Another reason was as cogent, if Machiavellian: the communists were the most powerful enemies of his own old enemy, German reaction and German chauvinism. In spite of all this, Heine never became a socialist. But he did take up a position toward socialism which enabled him to look at the bourgeois society of his day, and at the future, without illusions.

Let us look at the changing forms perspective has taken for the bourgeois writer over the course of history. Before the French Revolution, realism did not have to face this problem. Perspective went no further than the overthrow of the feudal society of absolutism. The shape of the new bourgeois society was—from the point of view of the artist—of secondary importance. This was to change after the French Revolution. The degree to which the works of Goethe and Balzac, of Stendhal and Tolstoy, are still interlarded with utopian elements is very striking. It expresses their ambiguity toward bourgeois society. On the one hand, we still find a bourgeois-progressive perspective (with Tolstoy, it is still peasant-plebeian) which is rooted in, and does not look beyond, bourgeois society. But on the other hand there is a deeply felt need to go beyond the mere affirmation of existing conditions, to explore values not to be found in present society—values which come to be thought of, necessarily, as hidden in the future. Thus the utopian perspective serves a double function: it enables the artist to portray the present age truthfully without giving way to despair.

A later phase of critical realism—Flaubert is a good example—rejects such utopianism with a gesture of ascetic defiance. Utopian writing in this period takes the form of an escape into exoticisms whether of time or place. This dual critique—ironic detachment from his own ineradicable romanticism, but also rejection of a bourgeois world condemned by the standards of that romanticism—enabled Flaubert to view his age without hope, but also without fear. In bourgeois realism his is a strange borderline case: Flaubert's portrayal of society hints occasionally at the coming dichotomy, but it preserves much of the richness and truth-to-life of earlier realism. After Flaubert,

new problems come to the fore. But, before entering into these, it may be useful to instance the tendencies running counter to realism in the literature of the age.

At the time when Heine was composing his later works—about a decade after the above confession—another writer put down his views on the subject—Dostoevsky, in his story *From the Darkness of the City.* This story contains perhaps the first authentic description of the isolation of modern bourgeois man—an interesting ideological link between Dostoevsky and modernism. Yet Dostoevsky still sees such isolation in a social context. He does not idealize it; rather, he paints it in a pessimistic hue and shows it to be a blind alley. The social circumstances and consequences of this isolation are clearly seen by Dostoevsky—where modernism would tend to mystify. His hero's sufferings derive from the inhumanity of early capitalism, and particularly from its destructive influence on personal relationships. Dostoevsky loathes capitalism with all his being; but he rejects a socialist solution no less passionately. His protest against the inhumanity of capitalism is transformed into a sophistical, anti-capitalist romanticism, into a critique of socialism and democracy. Thus, fear of socialism completes the isolation of man in capitalist society (though with Dostoevsky this isolation is to some extent concealed by his pan-Slav clerical mysticism).

Dostoevsky represents, of course, a comparatively early stage in this evolution. Nietzsche, who substitutes a critique of bourgeois philistinism for this critique of bourgeois inhumanity, generalizes the attitude toward life described in Dostoevsky's story *The Cellar.* This is not the place to show how Nietzsche's identification of capitalism and socialism, his raising of the specter of "mass culture," his rejection of democracy and progress, helped to prepare the way for Hitler's demagogy. I attempted this in my book *The Destruction of Reason.* There, I tried to show how these tendencies had lived on in a modified form after Hitler's defeat. The opposition to socialism gathered momentum and was soon transformed into an ideological crusade which, though nominally concerned with the preservation of democracy, was really nourished by a growing fear of the threat which mass society poses to the ruling elite. If we add to this the dark shadows cast by the nuclear bomb, it will easily be understood how the fear thus engendered could be yoked to acquiescence in, or active support for, Cold War policies.

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The problem of narrative detail, of naturalism, has thus to be seen in a wider context. Since human nature is not finally separable from social reality, each narrative detail will be significant to the extent that it expresses the dialectic between man-as-individual and man-as-social-being. It is these tensions and contradictions both within the individual, and underlying the individual's relation with his fellow human beings—all of which tensions increase in intensity with the evolution of capitalism—that must form the subject-matter of contemporary realism. The realistic writer must seek the nodal points of these conflicts, determine where they are at their most intense and most typical, and

give suitable expression to them. Good realistic detail often in itself implies a judgment on these conflicts. The question of what we mean by the *norm,* and by *distortion,* is also involved.

These categories—norm and distortion—can be used to determine an individual's relation to society; but they can only do this if the literary technique allows of equal treatment being given to both aspects of human nature. A realistic work of art, however rich in descriptive detail, is always opposed to naturalism. But an artistic method which reduces the dialectical—social-and-individual—totality of human existence must relapse, as we have seen, into naturalistic arbitrariness. It will then be incapable of depicting distortion in human nature or in the individual's relation to his environment—incapable, that is, of seeing distortion as distortion.

Once again we observe the profoundly anti-artistic character of modernism. The historical legitimation of modernism derives from the fact that the distortion of human nature, the anti-artistic character of human relationships, is an inevitable product of capitalist society. Yet since modernism portrays this distortion without critical detachment, indeed devises stylistic techniques which emphasize the necessity of distortion in any kind of society, it may be said to distort distortion further. By attributing distortion to reality itself, modernism dismisses the counter-forces at work in reality as ontologically irrelevant. It is easy to understand that the experience of the contemporary capitalist world does produce, especially among intellectuals, *angst,* nausea, a sense of isolation, and despair. Indeed, a view of the world which *excluded* these emotions would prevent the present-day artist from depicting his world truthfully. The question is not: is *x* present in reality? But rather: does *x* represent the whole of reality? Again, the question is not: should *x* be excluded from literature? But rather: should we be content to leave it at *x*?

We are brought back once again to questions of ideology. If a writer takes *angst* to be the basic experience of modern man, his attitude toward the life of his time betrays an uncritical naïveté. "Naïveté" I want here to be understood in a philosophical sense. I went into this concept in my published correspondence with Anna Seghers about realism over two decades ago. I meant by it an attitude which excluded critical detachment, which registered the phenomena of life naïvely, which stuck to first impressions. This attitude, I showed then, may be combined with rigorous scientific investigation—though it will be a scientific activity uncritical of its own assumptions. We cannot go further into the question here—examining to what extent, for instance, this "naïveté" is a spontaneous reaction of the artist living under capitalism, and to what extent it is deliberately furthered to prevent the artist from criticizing capitalism's presuppositions. I want merely to point out the distinction between a critical and a naïve approach in the present context, in order to clarify its philosophical basis. I would like also to recall our earlier discussion of the connection between realism—i.e., a writer's critical understanding of the world he lives in—and the struggle for peace, which is similarly based on an ideological rejection of assumptions about the inevitability of war which are based on uncritical analysis of reality. The distinction between this approach and that

of modernism, which by its nature must be uncritical and naïve in its attitude to reality, should be sufficiently evident.

Franz Kafka is the classic example of the modern writer at the mercy of a blind and panic-stricken *angst.* His unique position he owes to the fact that he found a direct, uncomplex way of communicating this basic experience; he did so without having recourse to formalistic experimentation. Content is here the immediate determinant of aesthetic form—that is why Kafka belongs with the great realistic writers. Indeed, he is one of the greatest of all, if we consider how few writers have ever equaled his skill in the imaginative evocation of the concrete novelty of the world. Never was the quality of Kafka's achievement more striking or more needed than at the present day, when so many writers fall for slick experimentation. The impact of Kafka's work derives not only from his passionate sincerity—rare enough in our age—but also from the corresponding simplicity of the world he constructs. That is Kafka's most original achievement. Kierkegaard said, "The greater a man's originality, the more he is at the mercy of *angst.*" Kafka, original in the Kierkegaardian sense, describes this *angst* and the fragmented world which—it is incorrectly assumed—is both its complement and its cause. His originality lies not in discovering any new means of expression but in the utterly convincing, and yet continually startling, presentation of his invented world, and of his characters' reaction to it. "What shocks is not the monstrosity of it," writes Theodor W. Adorno, "but its matter-of-factness."

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Critical Realism and Socialist Realism

Our analysis of critical realism would be incomplete if it were limited to the contrast between critical realism and bourgeois modernism, and not extended to the relation between critical and socialist realism. It is impossible, of course, to go into all the problems of socialist realism in this study. I shall confine myself, therefore, to the relation between the two types of realism and touch only on those aspects of socialist realism which bear on the prospects for critical realism in our time.

Let us first consider the question of *perspective* in critical and socialist realism, as we did when dealing with bourgeois realism and modernism. The perspective of socialist realism is, of course, the struggle for socialism. This perspective will vary in form and content according to the level of social development and the subject-matter. The decisive point—particularly in contrast to critical realism—is not simply the acceptance of socialism. This is possible within the framework of critical realism. An outright affirmation of socialism is not, of course, characteristic of the main body of critical realist writing (I have shown that a negative attitude, readiness to respect the perspective of socialism and not condemn it out of hand, is sufficient). And it is true that such an affirmation will remain somewhat abstract, for even where a critical realist attempts to describe socialism, his is bound to be a description *from the outside.*

That, then, is the crucial distinction. Socialist realism differs from critical realism, not only in being based on a concrete socialist perspective, but also in using this perspective to describe the forces working toward socialism *from the inside.* Socialist society is seen as an independent entity, not simply as a foil to capitalist society, or as a refuge from its dilemmas—as with those critical realists who have come closest to embracing socialism. Even more important is the treatment of those social forces leading toward socialism; scientific, as against utopian, socialism aims to locate those forces scientifically, just as socialist realism is concerned to locate those human qualities which make for the creation of a new social order. The revolt against the old order, against capitalism—the point of contact between critical realism and a socialist perspective—becomes a subordinate element in this wider context. Since perspective, as we have seen, plays a decisive role as a selective principle in literature, these considerations are of no small importance in forming the style of socialist realism.

Let us consider our first point in greater detail—description of socialism from the inside rather than from the outside. No distinction between a superficial and a profound grasp of human character is necessarily implied. Great satirists, such as Swift or Saltykov-Shchedrin, always saw character from the outside. Indeed, this refusal to enter into all the subjective complexities of the world they satirize is the presupposition of a good satirical typology. The opposition I have in mind is different. By the "outside" method a writer obtains a typology based on the individual and his personal conflicts; and from this base he works toward wider social significance. The "inside" method seeks to discover an Archimedian point in the midst of social contradictions, and then bases its typology on an analysis of these contradictions.

Many realistic writers use both methods; and both methods may coexist in the same work of art. Dickens is a case in point: his plebeian characters are explored from the inside, his upper- and middle-class characters from the outside. Dickens is perhaps an extreme case, but a most instructive one if we wish to study the social origins of the phenomenon. It is evident that writers will tend to present an inside picture of the class on which their own experience of society is based. All other social classes will tend to be seen from the outside. But, again, this is no more than a generalization: Tolstoy's view of the world approximates to that of the exploited Russian peasantry; yet he undoubtedly portrays the gentry, and a section of the aristocracy, from the inside.

On the other hand, only vulgar sociology conceives of class structure as something static. It is a dynamic thing, containing within itself past, present, and future of the society in question. There is a tendency for all writers to present the world of their immediate experience from the inside, and the past or future of that world (if the latter promises to be different from the present) from the outside. The great realists of course, vary in the range of their "inside" knowledge. Shakespeare, no doubt, achieved the broadest range, depicting even the inside world of characters entirely unsympathetic to him. But many writers have deluded themselves as to their true position. Balzac's Quixotic *ancien régime* aristocracy is, unquestionably, a portrait from the inside. Yet it is a portrait done with devastating irony and critical detachment, not at all on

a level with those of Alfred de Vigny or Achim von Arnim. Again, Balzac is wholly out of sympathy with his Mucingens or Gobseks; but they are drawn, nevertheless, from the inside.

With these reservations, it is clear that an "outside" description of events in the past may attain a high degree of authenticity. In literature, as elsewhere, a critical understanding of the present is the key to the understanding of the past. In regard to the future, this is not necessarily so. In the preceding chapter I examined the modifications perspective underwent during the history of critical realism. We concluded that, for a correct assessment of the future, the perspective of socialism is necessarily increasing in importance. Yet, though this new perspective will help the critical realist to understand his own age, it will not enable him to conceive the future *from the inside.*

In socialist realism, this barrier is removed. Since its ideological basis is an understanding of the future, individuals working for that future will necessarily be portrayed from the inside. Here is the first point of divergence, then, between critical and socialist realism. Socialist realism is able to portray from the inside human beings whose energies are devoted to the building of a different future, and whose psychological and moral make-up is determined by this. The great critical realists failed to break through this barrier—there are many instances of this failure, from Zola's Etienne Lantier to Martin du Gard's Jacques Tibault. The description of Jacques Tibault as a child, and as a young man, is masterly. There are, too, successful episodes dealing with Tibault's socialist phase—particularly the love scenes in the Paris of August 1914. But the task of portraying Tibault's new socialist consciousness was beyond Martin du Gard's powers.

The explanation is to be found in the *concrete* nature of the new socialist perspective. I should perhaps say here what I mean by "concrete," since we shall be concerned with the problem of its realization later on. Concreteness, then, in my sense, involves an awareness of the development, structure and goal of society as a whole. The great critical realists did, of course, at times achieve a comprehensive description of the totality of society. Yet there was an important period in the history of critical realism (i.e., before Walter Scott) when the writer was hardly aware of the historical nature of the reality he described. And even nineteenth-century historicism—which suffered a severe setback during the imperialist period—was deeply problematical. It was precisely where critical realism was most comprehensive and most profound—in the writings of Balzac and Tolstoy—that the historical diagnosis was most mistaken. Yet it permitted some extraordinary insights, both into man's social nature and into his role in history. The contrast was intensified in the imperialist period, following the decay of bourgeois historicism. Great realism was still possible—Thomas Mann is the obvious example—but it was at odds with its own ideology.

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Having pointed to the similarities, we must now also point to the differences. We have seen why the *Bildungsroman* plays an important part in both literatures. Hegel once formulated—with a cynicism recalling that of Ricardo—

the social purpose of education under capitalism as follows: "During his years of apprenticeship the hero is permitted to sow his wild oats; he learns to subordinate his wishes and views to the interests of the society; he then enters that society's hierarchic scheme and finds in it a comfortable niche." In one sense, many of the great bourgeois novels contradict Hegel; in another, they confirm him. They contradict him inasmuch as the educational process does not always culminate in acceptance of, and adaptation to, bourgeois society. The realization of youthful convictions and dreams is obstructed by the pressures of society; the rebellious hero is broken, and driven into isolation, but the reconciliation with society of which Hegel speaks is not always extracted. On the other hand, since the individual's conflict with society often ends in resignation, the end-effect is not so different from what Hegel suggests. For society emerges triumphant, in spite of the hero's struggles.

In socialist society, the situation is different. A *Bildungsroman,* set in a socialist society, only apparently conforms to this pattern; experience itself will convert bourgeois individualist into social being. The end is not resignation. On the contrary, the process begins with resignation and leads on to active participation in the life of the community. Nor does the hero end up in isolation, as in so many of the later novels of critical realism. Rather, isolation gives way to an increasing involvement with the new social forces; a new and higher type of personality emerges. It is no accident that, whereas the typical bourgeois *Bildungsroman* takes its hero from childhood to the critical years of early adult life, its socialist counterpart often begins with the crisis of consciousness the adult bourgeois intellectual experiences when confronted with socialism. Both reflect reality. Under capitalism, we have to do with that element of arbitrariness which, as Marx showed, governs social existence. Under socialism, we have to do with the mental crisis which revolution represents for the bourgeois intellectual.

Particularly in the early phases of socialism, the main personal dilemma of the bourgeois intellectual—the decision for or against socialism—coincides with his dilemma as an artist. The coincidence can very well be stimulating. The energies released by his personal conflict with society strengthen his artistic efforts; whereas the correct formulation of his artistic problem may help the writer in his personal life. It is certainly striking how many novels of the early post-revolutionary period dealt with this crisis. It is even more striking that not a few writers were led to socialism through portraying this conflict, graduating from critical to socialist realism. The most interesting case is Alexei Tolstoy's powerful trilogy *Golgotha,* the first part of which was written in self-imposed exile, whereas the conclusion reflects a conscious acceptance of socialism. The same process can be observed in the writings of Fedin, Shaginyan and others.

During the transition period the dividing line between critical and socialist realism may not be drawn too rigidly. The two styles, distinguishable in theory, may well be found together in one work of art. This should not be surprising in the light of our previous investigations. We saw that for critical realism under capitalism a socialist perspective can prove a fruitful stimulus. Clearly, with the growing currency of socialist ideas once socialist society is

established, this fruitful influence will increase—until, finally, the distinction between the two is blurred. This development will run parallel with the development of the new society. At first, the dictatorship of the proletariat introduces socialization only in limited fields; even there, people do not always respond at once to the new developments. The new socialist institutions, that is to say, have to rely for a considerable period on people who, mechanically obeying its formulas, retain a bourgeois mentality. In other spheres—for instance in agriculture—the transformation process is even slower. Not only do bourgeois forms of social life persist for a long time, but the new forms taking their place do not always correspond to a socialist pattern.

The transitional forms between critical and socialist realism thus have parallels in the development of socialism. The critical realist, following tradition, analyzes the contradictions in the disintegrating old order and the emerging new order. But he does not only see them as contradictions in the outside world, he feels them to be contradictions within himself; though he tends—again following tradition—to emphasize the contradictions rather than the forces working towards reconciliation. The elucidation of these contradictions (often overlooked or neglected by socialist realism), and the significance accorded to them, serve to strengthen the alliance between the two types of realism. Both work with the same material, but they apply themselves in different ways to the exploration of social reality. The deeper they probe, the closer will social reality approximate to the desired socialist society, and the closer will grow the ties between critical and socialist realism. In the process, the negative perspective of critical realism will gradually be transformed into a positive, socialist perspective.

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Joseph Frank

From Spatial Form in Modern Literature

Introduction

"Lessing's *Laocoön,*" André Gide once remarked, "is one of those books it is good to reiterate or contradict every thirty years."[1] Despite this excellent advice, neither of these attitudes toward *Laocoön* has been adopted by modern writers. Lessing's attempt to define the limits of literature and the plastic arts has become a dead issue; it is neither reiterated nor contradicted but simply neglected. Lessing, to be sure, occupies an honorable place in the history of criticism and aesthetics. But while his work is invariably referred to with respect, it can hardly be said to have exercised any fecundating influence on modern aesthetic thinking.[2] This was comprehensible enough in the nineteenth century, with its overriding passion for historicism; but it is not so easy to understand at present when so many writers on aesthetic problems are occupied with questions of form. To a historian of literature or the plastic arts, Lessing's effort to define the unalterable laws of these mediums may well have seemed quixotic. Modern critics, however, no longer overawed by the bugbear of historical method, have begun to take up again the problems he tried to solve.

Lessing's own solution to these problems seems at first glance to have little relation to modern concerns. The literary school against which the arguments of Laocoön were directed—the school of pictorial poetry—has long since ceased to interest the modern sensibility. Many of Lessing's conclusions grew out of a now antiquated archaeology, whose discoveries, to make matters worse, he knew mainly at second hand. But it was precisely his attempt to rise above history, to define the unalterable laws of aesthetic perception rather than to attack or defend any particular school, that gives his work the perennial freshness to which André Gide alluded. The validity of his theories does not depend on their relationship to the literary movements of his time or on the extent of his firsthand acquaintanceship with the art works of antiquity. It is thus always possible to consider them apart from these circumstances and to use them in the analysis of later developments.

In *Laocoön* Lessing fuses two distinct currents of thought, both of great importance in the cultural history of his time. The archaeological researches of his contemporary Winckelmann had stimulated a passionate interest in Greek culture among the Germans. Lessing went back to Homer, Aristotle, and the Greek tragedians and, using his firsthand knowledge, attacked the distorted

critical theories (supposedly based on classical authority) that had filtered into France through Italian commentators and had then taken hold in Germany.

At the same time Locke and the empirical school of English philosophy had given a new impulse to aesthetic speculation. For Locke tried to solve the problem of knowledge by breaking down complex ideas into simple elements of sensation and then examining the operations of the mind to see how these sensations were combined to form ideas. This method was soon taken over by aestheticians, whose focus of interest shifted from external prescriptions for beauty to an analysis of aesthetic perception; and writers like Shaftesbury, Hogarth, Hutcheson, and Burke concerned themselves with the precise character and combination of impressions that gave aesthetic pleasure to the sensibility.

Lessing's friend and critical ally Mendelssohn popularized this method of dealing with aesthetic problems in German; and Lessing himself was a close student of all the works of this school. As a result, *Laocoön* stands at the confluence of these intellectual currents. Lessing analyzes the laws of aesthetic perception, shows how they prescribe necessary limitations to literature and the plastic arts, and then demonstrates how Greek writers and painters, especially his cherished Homer, created masterpieces in obedience to these laws.

Lessing's argument starts from the simple observation that literature and the plastic arts, working through different sensuous mediums, must differ in the fundamental laws governing their creation. "If it is true," Lessing wrote in *Laocoön,* "that painting and poetry in their imitations make use of entirely different means or symbols—the first, namely, of form and color in space, the second of articulated sounds in time—if these symbols indisputably require a suitable relation to the thing symbolized, then it is clear that symbols arranged in juxtaposition can only express subjects of which the wholes or parts exist in juxtaposition; while consecutive symbols can only express subjects of which the wholes or parts are themselves consecutive."

Lessing did not originate this formulation, which has a long and complicated history; but he was the first to use it systematically as an instrument of critical analysis. Form in the plastic arts, according to Lessing, is necessarily spatial because the visible aspect of objects can best be presented juxtaposed in an instant of time. Literature, on the other hand, makes use of language, composed of a succession of words proceeding through time; and it follows that literary form, to harmonize with the essential quality of its medium, must be based primarily on some form of narrative sequence.

Lessing used this argument to attack two artistic genres highly popular in his day: pictorial poetry and allegorical painting. The pictorial poet tried to paint with words; the allegorical painter to tell a story in visible images. Both were doomed to fail because their aims were in contradiction to the fundamental properties of their mediums. No matter how accurate and vivid a verbal description might be, Lessing argued, it could not give the unified impression of a visible object. No matter how skillfully figures might be chosen and arranged, a painting or a piece of sculpture could not successfully set forth the various stages of an action.

As Lessing develops his argument, he attempts to prove that the Greeks,

with an unfailing sense of aesthetic propriety, respected the limits imposed on different art mediums by the conditions of human perception. The importance of Lessing's distinction, however, does not depend on these ramifications of his argument, nor even on his specific critical judgments. Various critics have quarreled with one or another of these judgments and have thought this sufficient to undermine Lessing's position; but such a notion is based on a misunderstanding of *Laocoön*'s importance in the history of aesthetic theory. It is quite possible to use Lessing's insights solely as instruments of analysis, without proceeding to judge the value of individual works by how closely they adhere to the norms he laid down; and unless this is done, as a matter of fact, the real meaning of *Laocoön* cannot be understood. For what Lessing offered was not a new set of norms but a new approach to aesthetic form.

The conception of aesthetic form inherited by the eighteenth century from the Renaissance was purely external. Greek and Roman literature—or what was known of it—was presumed to have reached perfection, and later writers could do little better than imitate its example. A horde of commentators and critics had deduced certain rules from the classical masterpieces (rules like the Aristotelian unities, of which Aristotle had never heard), and modern writers were warned to obey these rules if they wished to appeal to a cultivated public. Gradually, these rules became an immutable mold into which the material of a literary work had to be poured: the form of a work was nothing but the technical arrangement dictated by the rules. Such a superficial and mechanical notion of aesthetic form, however, led to serious perversions of taste—Shakespeare was considered a barbarian even by so sophisticated a writer as Voltaire, and, in translating Homer, Pope found it necessary to do a good deal of editing. Lessing's point of view, breaking sharply with this external conception of form, marks the road for aesthetic speculation to follow in the future.

For Lessing, as we have seen, aesthetic form is not an external arrangement provided by a set of traditional rules. Rather, it is the relation between the sensuous nature of the art medium and the conditions of human perception. The "natural man" of the eighteenth century was not to be bound by traditional political forms but was to create them in accordance with his own nature. Similarly, art was to create its own forms out of itself rather than accept them ready-made from the practice of the past; and criticism, instead of prescribing rules for art, was to explore the necessary laws by which art governs itself.

No longer was aesthetic form confused with mere externals of technique or felt as a strait jacket into which the artist, willy-nilly, had to force his creative ideas. Form issued spontaneously from the organization of the art work as it presented itself to perception. Time and space were the two extremes defining the limits of literature and the plastic arts in their relation to sensuous perception; and, following Lessing's example, it is possible to trace the evolution of art forms by their oscillations between these two poles.

The purpose of the present essay is to apply Lessing's method to modern literature—to trace the evolution of form in modern poetry and, more particularly, in the novel. For modern literature, as exemplified by such writers as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce, is moving in the

direction of spatial form; and this tendency receives an original development in Djuna Barnes's remarkable book *Nightwood.* All these writers ideally intend the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence. And since changes in aesthetic form always involve major changes in the sensibility of a particular cultural period, an effort will be made to outline the spiritual attitudes that have led to the predominance of spatial form.

Modern Poetry

Modern Anglo-American poetry received its initial impetus from the Imagist movement of the years directly preceding and following the First World War. Imagism was important not so much for any actual poetry written by Imagist poets—no one knew quite what an Imagist poet was—but rather because it opened the way for later developments by its clean break with sentimental Victorian verbiage. The critical writings of Ezra Pound, the leading theoretician of Imagism, are an astonishing farrago of acute aesthetic perceptions thrown in among a series of boyishly naughty remarks whose chief purpose is to *épater le bourgeois.* But Pound's definition of the image, perhaps the keenest of his perceptions, is of fundamental importance for any discussion of modern literary form.

"An 'Image,'" Pound wrote, "is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." The implications of this definition should be noted: an image is defined not as a pictorial reproduction but as a unification of disparate ideas and emotions into a complex presented spatially in an instant of time. Such a complex does not proceed discursively, in unison with the laws of language, but strikes the reader's sensibility with an instantaneous impact. Pound stresses this aspect by adding, in the next paragraph, that only the *instantaneous* presentation of such complexes gives "that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art."[3]

At the very outset, therefore, modern poetry advocates a poetic method in direct contradiction to Lessing's analysis of language. And if we compare Pound's definition of the image with Eliot's description of the psychology of the poetic process, we can see clearly how profoundly this conception has influenced our modern idea of the nature of poetry. For Eliot, the distinctive quality of a poetic sensibility is its capacity to form new wholes, to fuse seemingly disparate experiences into an organic unity. The ordinary man, Eliot writes, "falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes."[4] Pound had attempted to define the image in terms of its aesthetic attributes; Eliot, in this passage, is describing its psychological origin; but the result in a poem would be the same in both cases.

Such a view of the nature of poetry immediately gave rise to numerous problems. How was more than one image to be included in a poem? If the chief value of an image was its capacity to present an intellectual and emotional complex simultaneously, linking images in a sequence would clearly de-

stroy most of their efficacy. Or was the poem itself one vast image, whose individual components were to be apprehended as a unity? But then it would be necessary to undermine the inherent consecutiveness of language, frustrating the reader's normal expectation of a sequence and forcing him to perceive the elements of the poem as juxtaposed in space rather than unrolling in time.

This is precisely what Eliot and Pound attempted in their major works. Both poets, in their earlier work, had still retained some elements of conventional structure. Their poems were looked upon as daring and revolutionary chiefly because of technical matters, like the loosening of metrical pattern and the handling of subjects ordinarily considered nonpoetic. Perhaps this is less true of Eliot than of Pound, especially the Eliot of the more complex early works like *Prufrock, Gerontion* and *Portrait of a Lady;* but even here, although the sections of the poem are not governed by syntactical logic, the skeleton of an implied narrative structure is always present. The reader of *Prufrock* is swept up in a narrative movement from the very first lines:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening . . .

And the reader, accompanying Prufrock, finally arrives at their mutual destination:

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

At this point the poem becomes a series of more or less isolated fragments, each stating some aspect of Prufrock's emotional dilemma. But the fragments are now localized and focused on a specific set of circumstances, and the reader can organize them by referring to the implied situation. The same method is employed in *Portrait of a Lady,* while in *Gerontion* the reader is specifically told that he has been reading the "thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season"—the stream of consciousness of "an old man in a dry month, being read to by a boy, waiting for the rain." In both poems there is a perceptible framework around which the seemingly disconnected passages of the poem can be organized.

This is one reason why Pound's *Mauberley* and Eliot's early work were first regarded, not as forerunners of a new poetic form, but as latter-day *vers de société*—witty, disillusioned, with a somewhat brittle charm, but lacking that quality of "high seriousness" which Matthew Arnold had brandished as the touchstone of poetic excellence. These poems were considered unusual mainly because *vers de société* had long fallen out of fashion, but there was little difficulty in accepting them as an entertaining departure from the grand style of the nineteenth century.

In the *Cantos* and *The Waste Land,* however, it should have been clear that a radical transformation was taking place in aesthetic structure; but this transformation has been touched on only peripherally by modern critics. R. P. Blackmur comes closest to the central problem while analyzing what he calls Pound's "anecdotal" method. The special form of the *Cantos,* Blackmur explains, "is that of the anecdote begun in one place, taken up in one or more

other places, and finished, if at all, in still another. This deliberate disconnectedness, this art of a thing continually alluding to itself, continually breaking off short, is the method by which the *Cantos* tie themselves together. So soon as the reader's mind is concerted with the material of the poem, Mr. Pound deliberately disconcerts it, either by introducing fresh and disjunct material or by reverting to old and, apparently, equally disjunct material."[5]

Blackmur's remarks apply equally well to *The Waste Land,* where syntactical sequence is given up for a structure depending on the perception of relationships between disconnected word-groups. To be properly understood, these word-groups must be juxtaposed with one another and perceived simultaneously. Only when this is done can they be adequately grasped; for, while they follow one another in time, their meaning does not depend on this temporal relationship. The one difficulty of these poems, which no amount of textual exegesis can wholly overcome, is the internal conflict between the time-logic of language and the space-logic implicit in the modern conception of the nature of poetry.

Aesthetic form in modern poetry, then, is based on a space-logic that demands a complete reorientation in the reader's attitude toward language. Since the primary reference of any word-group is to something inside the poem itself, language in modern poetry is really reflexive. The meaning-relationship is completed only by the simultaneous perception in space of word-groups that have no comprehensible relation to each other when read consecutively in time. Instead of the instinctive and immediate reference of words and word-groups to the objects or events they symbolize and the construction of meaning from the sequence of these references, modern poetry asks its readers to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity.

It would not be difficult to trace this conception of poetic form back to Mallarmé's ambition to create a language of "absence" rather than of presence—a language in which words negated their objects instead of designating them;[6] nor should one overlook the evident formal analogies between *The Waste Land* and the *Cantos* and Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dês.* Mallarmé, indeed, dislocated the temporality of language far more radically than either Eliot or Pound has ever done; and his experience with *Un Coup de dês* showed that this ambition of modern poetry has a necessary limit. If pursued with Mallarmé's relentlessness, it culminates in the self-negation of language and the creation of a hybrid pictographic "poem" that can only be considered a fascinating historical curiosity. Nonetheless, this conception of aesthetic form, which may be formulated as the principle of reflexive reference, has left its traces on all of modern poetry. And the principle of reflexive reference is the link connecting the aesthetic development of modern poetry with similar experiments in the modern novel.

Flaubert and Joyce

For a study of aesthetic form in the modern novel, Flaubert's famous county fair scene in *Madame Bovary* is a convenient point of departure. This scene has been justly praised for its mordant caricature of bourgeois pomposity, its

portrayal—unusually sympathetic for Flaubert—of the bewildered old servant, and its burlesque of the pseudoromantic rhetoric by which Rodolphe woos the sentimental Emma. At present, however, it is enough to notice the method by which Flaubert handles the scene—a method we might as well call cinematographic since this analogy comes immediately to mind.

As Flaubert sets the scene, there is action going on simultaneously at three levels; and the physical position of each level is a fair index to its spiritual significance. On the lowest plane, there is the surging, jostling mob in the street, mingling with the livestock brought to the exhibitions. Raised slightly above the street by a platform are the speechmaking officials, bombastically reeling off platitudes to the attentive multitudes. And on the highest level of all, from a window overlooking the spectacle, Rodolphe and Emma are watching the proceedings and carrying on their amorous conversation in phrases as stilted as those regaling the crowds. Albert Thibaudet has compared this scene to the medieval mystery play, in which various related actions occur simultaneously on different stage levels;[7] but this acute comparison refers to Flaubert's intention rather than to his method. "*Everything should sound simultaneously,*" Flaubert later wrote, in commenting on this scene; "one should hear the bellowing of cattle, the whispering of the lovers, and the rhetoric of the officials all at the same time."[8]

But since language proceeds in time, it is impossible to approach this simultaneity of perception except by breaking up temporal sequence. And this is exactly what Flaubert does. He dissolves sequence by cutting back and forth between the various levels of action in a slowly rising crescendo until—at the climax of the scene—Rodolphe's Chateaubriandesque phrases are read at almost the same moment as the names of prize winners for raising the best pigs. Flaubert takes care to underline this satiric similarity by exposition as well as by juxtaposition—as if afraid the reflexive relations of the two actions might not be grasped: "From magnetism, by slow degrees, Rodolphe had arrived at affinities, and while M. le Président was citing Cincinnatus at his plow, Diocletian planting his cabbages and the emperors of China ushering in the new year with sowing-festivals, the young man was explaining to the young woman that these irresistible attractions sprang from some anterior existence."

This scene illustrates, on a small scale, what we mean by the spatialization of form in a novel. For the duration of the scene, at least, the time-flow of the narrative is halted; attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the immobilized time-area. These relationships are juxtaposed independently of the progress of the narrative, and the full significance of the scene is given only by the reflexive relations among the units of meaning. In Flaubert's scene, however, the unit of meaning is not, as in modem poetry, a word-group or a fragment of an anecdote; it is the totality of each level of action taken as an integer. The unit is so large that each integer can be read with an illusion of complete understanding, yet with a total unawareness of what Thibaudet calls the "dialectic of platitude" interweaving all levels and finally linking them together with devastating irony.

In other words, the adoption of spatial form in Pound and Eliot resulted

in the disappearance of coherent sequence after a few lines; but the novel, with its larger unit of meaning, can preserve coherent sequence within the unit of meaning and break up only the time-flow of narrative. Because of this difference readers of modern poetry are practically forced to read reflexively to get any literal sense, while readers of a novel like *Nightwood,* for example, are led to expect narrative sequence by the deceptive normality of language sequence within the unit of meaning. But this does not affect the parallel between aesthetic form in modern poetry and the form of Flaubert's scene. Both can be properly understood only when their units of meaning are apprehended reflexively in an instant of time.

Flaubert's scene, although interesting in itself, is of minor importance to his novel as a whole and is skillfully blended back into the main narrative structure after fulfilling its satiric function. But Flaubert's method was taken over by James Joyce and applied on a gigantic scale in the composition of *Ulysses.* Joyce composed his novel of a vast number of references and cross references that relate to each other independently of the time sequence of the narrative. These references must be connected by the reader and viewed as a whole before the book fits together into any meaningful pattern. Ultimately, if we are to believe Stuart Gilbert, these systems of reference form a complete picture of practically everything under the sun, from the stages of man's life and the organs of the human body to the colors of the spectrum; but these structures are far more important for Joyce, as Harry Levin has remarked, than they could ever possibly be for the reader.[9] And while students of Joyce, fascinated by his erudition, have usually applied themselves to exegesis, our problem is to inquire into the perceptual form of his novel.

Joyce's most obvious intention in *Ulysses* is to give the reader a picture of Dublin seen as a whole—to re-create the sights and sounds, the people and places, of a typical Dublin day, much as Flaubert had re-created his *comice agricole.* And like Flaubert, Joyce aimed at attaining the same unified impact, the same sense of simultaneous activity occurring in different places. As a matter of fact, Joyce frequently makes use of the same method as Flaubert (cutting back and forth between different actions occurring at the same time), and he usually does so to obtain the same ironic effect. But Joyce faced the additional problem of creating this impression of simultaneity for the life of a whole teeming city and of maintaining it—or rather of strengthening it—through hundreds of pages that must be read as a sequence. To meet this problem Joyce was forced to go far beyond what Flaubert had done. Flaubert had still maintained a clear-cut narrative line except in the county fair scene; but Joyce breaks up his narrative and transforms the very structure of his novel into an instrument of his aesthetic intention.

Joyce conceived *Ulysses* as a modern epic. And in the epic, as Stephen Dedalus tells us in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* "the personality of the artist, at first sight a cry or a cadence and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself, so to speak . . . the artist, like the God of creation, remains within or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his

finger-nails." The epic is thus synonymous for Joyce with the complete self-effacement of the author; and with his usual uncompromising rigor Joyce carries this implication further than anyone had previously dared.

For Joyce assumes—what is obviously not true—that all his readers are Dubliners, intimately acquainted with Dublin life and the personal history of his characters. This allows him to refrain from giving any direct information about his characters and thus betraying the presence of an omniscient author. What Joyce does, instead, is to present the elements of his narrative—the relations between Stephen and his family, between Bloom and his wife, between Stephen and Bloom and the Dedalus family—in fragments, as they are thrown out unexplained in the course of casual conversation or as they lie embedded in the various strata of symbolic reference. The same is true of all the allusions to Dublin life and history and to the external events of the twenty-four hours during which the novel takes place. All the factual background summarized for the reader in an ordinary novel must here be reconstructed from fragments, sometimes hundreds of pages apart, scattered through the book. As a result, the reader is forced to read *Ulysses* in exactly the same manner as he reads modern poetry, that is, by continually fitting fragments together and keeping allusions in mind until, by reflexive reference, he can link them to their complements.

Joyce desired in this way to build up in the reader's mind a sense of Dublin as a totality, including all the relations of the characters to one another and all the events that enter their consciousness. The reader is intended to acquire this sense as he progresses through the novel, connecting allusions and references spatially and gradually becoming aware of the pattern of relationships. At the conclusion it might almost be said that Joyce literally wanted the reader to become a Dubliner. For this is what Joyce demands: that the reader have at hand the same instinctive knowledge of Dublin life, the same sense of Dublin as a huge, surrounding organism, that the Dubliner possesses as a birthright. It is this birthright that, at any one moment of time, gives the native a knowledge of Dublin's past and present as a whole; and it is only such knowledge that would enable the reader, like the characters, to place all the references in their proper context. This, it should be realized, is the equivalent of saying that Joyce cannot be read—he can only be reread. A knowledge of the whole is essential to an understanding of any part; but unless one is a Dubliner such knowledge can be obtained only after the book has been read, when all the references are fitted into their proper places and grasped as a unity. The burdens placed on the reader by this method of composition may well seem insuperable. But the fact remains that Joyce, in his unbelievably laborious fragmentation of narrative structure, proceeded on the assumption that a unified spatial apprehension of his work would ultimately be possible.

Proust

In a far more subtle manner than in either Joyce or Flaubert, the same principle of composition is at work in Marcel Proust. Since Proust himself tells us that his novel will have imprinted on it "a form which usually remains invisible, the form of Time," it may seem strange to speak of Proust in connection

with spatial form. He has almost invariably been considered the novelist of time par excellence—the literary interpreter of that Bergsonian "real time" intuited by the sensibility, as distinguished from the abstract, chronological time of the conceptual intelligence. To stop at this point, however, is to miss what Proust himself considered the deepest significance of his work.

Oppressed and obsessed by a sense of the ineluctability of time and the evanescence of human life, Proust was suddenly, he tells us, visited by certain quasi-mystical experiences (described in detail in the last volume of his book, *Le Temps Retrouvé*). These experiences provided him with a spiritual technique for transcending time, and thus enabled him to escape time's domination. Proust believed that these transcendent, extratemporal moments contained a clue to the ultimate nature of reality; and he wished to translate these moments to the level of aesthetic form by writing a novel. But no ordinary narrative, which tried to convey their meaning indirectly through exposition and description, could really do them justice. For Proust desired, through the medium of his novel, to communicate to the reader the full impact of these moments as he had felt them himself.

To define the method by which this is accomplished, we must first understand clearly the precise nature of the Proustian revelation. Each such experience was marked by a feeling that "the permanent essence of things, usually concealed, is set free and our true self, which had long seemed dead but was not dead in other ways, awakes, takes on fresh life as it receives the celestial nourishment brought to it." This celestial nourishment consists of some sound, or odor, or other sensory stimulus, "sensed anew, simultaneously in the present and the past."

But why should these moments seem so overwhelmingly valuable that Proust calls them celestial? Because, Proust observes, imagination ordinarily can operate only on the past; the material presented to imagination thus lacks any sensuous immediacy. At certain moments, however, the physical sensations of the past come flooding back to fuse with the present; and Proust believed that in these moments he grasped a reality "real without being of the present moment, ideal but not abstract." Only in these moments did he attain his most cherished ambition—"to seize, isolate, immobilize for the duration of a lightning flash" what otherwise he could not apprehend, "namely: a fragment of time in its pure state." For a person experiencing this moment, Proust adds, the word "death" no longer has meaning. "Situated outside the scope of time, what could he fear from the future?"

The significance of this experience, though obscurely hinted at throughout the book, is made explicit only in the concluding pages, which describe the final appearance of the narrator at the reception of the Princesse de Guermantes. And the narrator decides to dedicate the remainder of his life to recreating these experiences in a work of art. This work will differ essentially from all others because, at its root, will be a vision of reality refracted through an extratemporal perspective. This decision, however, should not be confused with the Renaissance view of art as the guarantor of immortality, nor with the late nineteenth-century cult of art for art's sake (though Proust has obvious affinities with both traditions, and particularly with the latter). It was not the

creation of a work of art per se that filled Proust with a sense of fulfilling a prophetic mission; it was the creation of a work of art that should stand as a monument to his *personal* conquest of time. His own novel was to be at once the vehicle through which he conveyed his vision and the *concrete experience* of that vision expressed in a form that compelled the world (the reader) to reexperience its exact effect on Proust's own sensibility.

The prototype of this method, like the analysis of the revelatory moment, appears during the reception at the Princesse de Guermantes's. The narrator has spent years in a sanatorium and has lost touch almost completely with the fashionable world of the earlier volumes; now he comes out of his seclusion to attend the reception. Accordingly, he finds himself bewildered by the changes in social position, and the even more striking changes in character and personality, among his former friends. No doubt these pages paint a striking picture of the invasion of French society by the upper bourgeoisie and the gradual breakdown of all social and moral standards caused by the First World War; but, as the narrator takes great pains to tell us, this is far from being the most important theme of this section of the book. Much more crucial is that, almost with the force of a blow, these changes jolt the narrator into a consciousness of the passage of time. He tries painfully to recognize old friends under the masks that, he feels, the years have welded to them. And when a young man addresses him respectfully instead of familiarly, he realizes suddenly that, without being aware of it, he too has assumed a mask—the mask of an elderly gentleman. The narrator now begins to understand that in order to become conscious of time it has been necessary for him to absent himself from his accustomed environment (in other words, from the stream of time acting on that environment) and then to plunge back into the stream again after a lapse of years. In so doing he finds himself presented with two images—the world as he had formerly known it and the world, transformed by time, that he now sees before him. When these two images become juxtaposed, the narrator discovers that the passage of time may suddenly be experienced through its visible effects.

Habit is a universal soporific, which ordinarily conceals the passage of time from those who have gone their accustomed ways. At any one moment of time the changes are so minute as to be imperceptible. "Other people," Proust writes, "never cease to change places in relation to ourselves. In the imperceptible, but eternal march of the world, we regard them as motionless in a moment of vision, too short for us to perceive the motion that is sweeping them on. But we have only to select in our memory two pictures taken of them at different moments, close enough together however for them not to have altered in themselves—perceptibly, that is to say—and the difference between the two pictures is a measure of the displacement that they have undergone in relation to us." By comparing these two images in a moment of time, the passage of time can be experienced concretely through the impact of its visible effects on the sensibility. And this discovery provides the narrator with a method that, in T. S. Eliot's phrase, is an "objective correlative" to the visionary apprehension of the fragment of "pure time" intuited in the revelatory moment.

When the narrator discovers this method of communicating his experi-

ence of the revelatory moment, he decides, as we have already observed, to incorporate it in a novel. But the novel the narrator undertakes to write has just been finished by the reader; and its form is controlled by the method that he has outlined in its concluding pages. In other words, the reader is substituted for the narrator and is placed by the author throughout the book in the same position as that occupied by the narrator before his own experience at the reception of the Princesse de Guermantes. This is done by the discontinuous presentation of character—a simple device which nonetheless is the clue to the form of Proust's vast structure.

Every reader soon notices that Proust does not follow any of his characters continuously through the whole course of his novel. Instead, they appear and reappear in various stages of their lives. Hundreds of pages sometimes go by between the time they are last seen and the time they reappear; and when they do turn up again, the passage of time has invariably changed them in some decisive way. Rather than being submerged in the stream of time and intuiting a character progressively, in a continuous line of development, the reader is confronted with various snapshots of the characters "motionless in a moment of vision" taken at different stages in their lives; and in juxtaposing these images he experiences the effects of the passage of time exactly as the narrator had done. As Proust has promised, therefore, he does stamp his novel indelibly with the form of time; but we are now in a position to understand exactly what he meant by this engagement.

To experience the passage of time, Proust had learned, it was necessary to rise above it and to grasp both past and present simultaneously in a moment of what he called "pure time." But "pure time," obviously, is not time at all—it is perception in a moment of time, that is to say, space. And, by the discontinuous presentation of character Proust forces the reader to juxtapose disparate images spatially, in a moment of time, so that the experience of time's passage is communicated directly to his sensibility. Ramon Fernandez has acutely stressed this point in some remarks on Proust and Bergson. "Much attention has been given to the importance of time in Proust's work," he writes, "but perhaps it has not been sufficiently noted that he gives time the value and characteristics of space . . . in affirming that the different parts of time reciprocally exclude and remain external to each other." And he adds that, while Proust's method of making contact with his *durée* is quite Bergsonian (that is, springing from the interpenetration of the past with the present), "the reactions of his intelligence on his sensibility, which determine the trajectory of his work, would orient him rather toward a *spatialisation* of time and memory."[10]

There is a striking analogy here between Proust's method and that of his beloved Impressionist painters; but this analogy goes far deeper than the usual comments about the "impressionism" of Proust's style. The Impressionist painters juxtaposed pure tones on the canvas, instead of mixing them on the palette, in order to leave the blending of colors to the eye of the spectator. Similarly, Proust gives us what might be called pure views of his characters—views of them "motionless in a moment of vision" in various phases of their lives—and allows the sensibility of the reader to fuse these views into a unity. Each view must be apprehended by the reader as a unit; and Proust's purpose

is achieved only when these units of meaning are referred to each other reflexively in a moment of time. As with Joyce and the modern poets, spatial form is also the structural scaffolding of Proust's labyrinthine masterpiece.

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The Parallel with the Plastic Arts

All the works so far considered are thus structurally similar in their employment of spatial form. And the question naturally arises of how to account for this surprising unanimity. But to answer this question satisfactorily, we must first widen the bounds of our analysis and consider the more general problem of the relation of art forms to the cultural climates in which they are created. This latter issue has attracted the attention of students of the arts at least since the time of Herder and Winckelmann; and Hegel, in his *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik,* gave a masterly analysis of various art styles as sensuous objectifications of diverse *Weltanschauungen.*

Stimulated by this intellectual heritage, and by the vast increase in historical knowledge accumulated during the nineteenth century, a group of German and Austrian art scholars and critics concentrated on the problem of form in the plastic arts. In a series of works published during the first quarter of the present century, they defined various categories of form in the plastic arts, traced in detail the shift from one form to another, and attempted to account for these changes of form by changes in the general cultural ambience.[11] T. E. Hulme, one of the few writers in English to have seriously concerned himself with the problem of form in literature, turned to this group for guidance; and we can do no better than to follow his example.

One German writer in particular exercised a strong influence on Hulme and through Hulme, by way of Eliot, probably on the whole of modern English criticism. This writer is Wilhelm Worringer, the author of the important book, *Abstraction and Empathy* (subtitled *A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*);[12] and it is in Worringer that we shall find the key to the problem of spatial form. Worringer's book appeared in 1908 as its author's doctoral dissertation, but despite this academic provenance it quickly went through numerous editions.

This fact proves—as Worringer himself notes in his third edition—that his subject was not merely academic but touched on problems vital to the modern sensibility. Moreover, as Worringer further remarks, while he and other scholars were rescuing and reevaluating neglected nonnaturalistic styles, creative artists at the very same moment were turning to these styles for inspiration. Worringer's book is impeccably scholastic, confining itself strictly to the past and excluding all but the briefest references to the art of his contemporaries; but it is nonetheless of the utmost relevance for modern art. And this relevance, along with Worringer's unusually expressive and incisive style, gives the book its noticeable quality of intellectual excitement and discovery—a quality that it retains even at the present time, when most of its ideas have become part of the standard jargon of art criticism.

The problem that Worringer sets out to solve is why, throughout the his-

tory of the plastic arts, there has been a continual alternation between naturalistic and nonnaturalistic styles. Periods of naturalism have included the classical age of Greek art, the Italian Renaissance, and the art of Western Europe to the end of the nineteenth century. In these eras the artist strives to represent the objective, three-dimensional world of "natural" vision and to reproduce with loving accuracy the processes and forms of organic nature (among which man is included). Periods of nonnaturalism include most of primitive art, Egyptian monumental sculpture, Byzantine art, Romanesque sculpture, the dominant art styles of the twentieth century. In these eras the artist abandons the projection of space entirely and returns to the plane, reduces organic nature to linear-geometric forms, and frequently eliminates all traces of organicism in favor of pure lines, forms, and colors. To be sure, there are vast differences between the styles of various periods thrown together in these rough categories; but the basic similarities between the works in one category and their basic opposition, taken as a group, to all the styles in the other category are no less striking and instructive. Worringer argues that we have here a fundamental polarity between two distinct types of creation in the plastic arts. And, most important of all, neither can be set up as the norm to which the other must adhere.

From the Renaissance to the close of the nineteenth century it was customary to accept one of these styles—naturalism—as an absolute standard. All other styles were regarded as barbarous aberrations, whose cause could only be ignorance and lack of skill; it was inconceivable that artists should have violated the canons of naturalism except as the result of a low level of cultural development. Franz Wickhoff, a well-known Austrian art historian of the old school, called nonnaturalistic art the "charming, childlike stammering of stylization."[13] This was the dominant opinion at the time Worringer's book was written, although the hegemony of naturalism had already begun to lose its power over the artists themselves; and Worringer applies himself to the task of dethroning naturalism as an absolute and eternal aesthetic standard.

To do so, Worringer employs the concept of *Kunstwollen,* or will-to-art, which had been developed in the extremely influential writings of another Austrian scholar, Alois Riegl. Riegl had argued that the impulse to creation in the plastic arts was not primarily an urge toward the imitation of the organic world. Instead, he postulated what he called an absolute will-to-art, or better still, will-to-form. This absolute will-to-form is the element common to all activity in the plastic arts, but it cannot be identified with any particular style. All styles, as a matter of fact, express this will-to-form in diverse fashions throughout the course of history. The importance of this idea is that it shifts the center of gravity in the study of style away from mechanical causation (the state of technical artistic knowledge at the time the style flourished) to a causality based on human will, feeling, and response. "The stylistic peculiarities of past epochs," Worringer writes, "are, therefore, not to be explained by lack of ability, but by a differently directed volition."[14] Nonnaturalism cannot be explained as a grotesquely unsuccessful attempt to reproduce natural appearances; nor should it be judged as if it were attempting to compete with naturalism on the latter's own terms. Both types of art were created to satisfy differing

spiritual needs and can only be understood if we examine the climates of feeling responsible for the predominance of one or the other at different times.

The heart of Worringer's book consists in his discussion of the spiritual conditions which impel the will-to-art to move in the direction of either naturalism or its opposite. Naturalism, Worringer points out, always has been created by cultures that have achieved an equilibrium between man and the cosmos. Like the Greeks of the classical period, man feels himself at one with organic nature; or, like modern man from the Renaissance to the close of the nineteenth century, he is convinced of his ability to dominate and control natural forces. In both these periods man has a relationship of confidence and intimacy with a world in which he feels at home; and he creates a naturalistic art that delights in reproducing the forms and appearances of the organic world. Worringer warns us, however, not to confuse this delight in the organic with a mere impulse toward imitation. Such imitation is a by-product of naturalism, not its cause. What we enjoy is not the imitation per se but our heightened sense of active harmony with the organic crystallized in the creation or apprehension of a naturalistic work of art.

On the other hand, when the relationship between man and the cosmos is one of disharmony and disequilibrium, we find that nonorganic, linear-geometric styles are always produced. To primitive peoples, for example, the external world is an incomprehensible chaos, a meaningless or terrifying confusion of occurrences and sensations; hence they would hardly take pleasure in depicting this world in their art. Living as they do in a universe of fear, the representation of its features would merely intensify their sense of anguish. Accordingly, their will-to-art goes in the opposite direction: it reduces the appearances of the natural world to linear-geometric forms. Such forms have the stability, the harmony, and the sense of order that primitive man cannot find in the flux of phenomena as—to use a phrase of Hart Crane's—they "plunge in silence by."

At a higher level of cultural development, nonnaturalistic styles like Byzantine and Romanesque are produced during periods dominated by a religion that rejects the natural world as a realm of evil and imperfection. Instead of depicting the profuse vitality of nature with all its temptations, the will-to-art turns toward spiritualization; it eliminates mass and corporeality and tries to approximate the eternal, ethereal tranquillity of otherworldly existence. In both instances—the primitive and the transcendental—the will-to-art, in response to the prevalent climate of feeling, diverges from naturalism to create aesthetic forms that will satisfy the spiritual needs of their creators. Such forms are always characterized by an emphasis on linear-geometric patterns, on the disappearance of modeling and the attempt to capture the illusion of space, on the dominance of the plane in all types of plastic art.

The Meaning of Spatial Form

The relevance of Worringer's views to modern developments in the plastic arts hardly requires any elaborate commentary. If there is one theme that dominates the history of modern culture since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it is precisely that of insecurity, instability, the feeling of loss of control

over the meaning and purpose of life amidst the continuing triumphs of science and technics. Artists are always the most sensitive barometers of cultural change; and it is hardly surprising that the stylistic evolution of modern art, when viewed as a whole, should reveal the effects of this spiritual crisis. But, as T. E. Hulme was one of the first to realize, aesthetic form in modern literature could be expected to undergo a similar change in response to the same climate of feeling; and Hulme's most interesting essay, *Romanticism and Classicism,* is an attempt to define this change as it affects literary form.

Regrettably, Hulme's notion of aesthetic form in literature was not very clearly worked out, and he mistakenly identified his own problem with the attack on Romanticism made by French neoclassic critics like Charles Maurras and Pierre Lasserre. These writers, who also exercised a strong influence on Irving Babbitt, had bitterly criticized the French Romantics on every conceivable ground, but what most impressed Hulme was their violent denunciation of Romantic subjectivity, their rejection of the unrestrained emotionalism that the Romantics sometimes fobbed off as literature. In reading Worringer, Hulme had remarked that nonnaturalistic styles suppressed the organic, which could also mean the personal and the subjective; and this, he thought, gave him the clue to the new and corresponding style in modern literature.

Accordingly, he announced that the new style in literature would also be impersonal and objective, or at least would not be "like pouring a pot of treacle over the dinner table." It would have a "dry hardness," the hardness of Pope and Horace, as against "the sloppiness which doesn't consider that a poem is a poem unless it is moaning or whining about something or other." "I prophesy," Hulme concludes, "that a period of dry, hard, classical verse is coming."[15]

From Hulme's own poetry we know that he was thinking of something resembling Imagism rather than the later influence of Donne and the Metaphysicals. Moreover, while his prophecy may seem to have struck remarkably close to home, his adoption of the time-honored classic-romantic antithesis could only confuse the issue. Hulme's great merit lies in having been among the first to realize that literary form would undergo a change similar to changes in the plastic arts; but he failed to define this literary form with any exactitude. Let us go back to Worringer, and, by combining his ideas with those of Lessing, see if we can take up where Hulme's happy but fragmentary intuitions left off.

Since literature is a time-art, we shall take our point of departure from Worringer's discussion of the disappearance of depth (and hence of the world in which time occurs) in nonnaturalistic styles. "It is precisely space," writes Worringer, "which, filled with atmospheric air, linking things together and destroying their individual closedness, gives things their temporal value and draws them into the cosmic interplay of phenomena."[16] Depth, the projection of three-dimensional space, gives objects a time-value because it places them in the real world in which events occur. Now time is the very condition of that flux and change from which, as we have seen, man wishes to escape when he is in a relation of disequilibrium with the cosmos; hence nonnaturalistic styles shun the dimension of depth and prefer the plane. If we look only at the medium of the plastic arts, it is, then, absolutely spatial when compared with literature.

But if we look at the relation of form and content, it is thus possible to speak of the plastic arts as being more or less spatial in the course of their history. Paradoxically, this means that the plastic arts have been most spatial when they did not represent the space dimension and least spatial when they did.

In a nonnaturalistic style, then, the inherent spatiality of the plastic arts is accentuated by the effort to remove all traces of time-value. And since modern art is nonnaturalistic, we can say that it is moving in the direction of increased spatiality. The significance of spatial form in modern literature now becomes clear; it is the exact complement in literature, on the level of aesthetic form, to the developments that have taken place in the plastic arts. Spatial form is the development that Hulme was looking for but did not know how to find. In both artistic mediums, one naturally spatial and the other naturally temporal, the evolution of aesthetic form in the twentieth century has been absolutely identical. For if the plastic arts from the Renaissance onward attempted to compete with literature by perfecting the means of narrative representation, then contemporary literature is now striving to rival the spatial apprehension of the plastic arts in a moment of time. Both contemporary art and literature have, each in its own way, attempted to overcome the time elements involved in their structures.

In a purely formal sense, therefore, we have demonstrated the complete congruity of aesthetic form in modern art with the form of modern literature. Thus we have laid bare what Worringer would call the "psychological" roots of spatial form in modern literature. But for a true psychology of style, as Worringer remarks in his *Form in Gothic,* the "formal value" must be shown "to be an accurate expression of the inner value, in such a way that duality of form and content ceases to exist."[17] Hence we must still discuss the relation between spatial form and the content of modern literature, and make some effort to resolve the duality to which Worringer refers.

In the case of Proust, we have already shown that his use of spatial form arose from an attempt to communicate the extratemporal quality of his revelatory moments. Ernst Robert Curtius, at the conclusion of one of the best studies of Proust, has rightly called him a Platonist; for his ultimate value, like that of Plato, was an existence wrenched free from all submission to the flux of the temporal.[18] Proust, as we have seen, was fully alive to the philosophic implications of his own work; and by explaining these implications for us in his analysis of the revelatory moment, Proust himself indicated the relationship between form and content in his great novel.

With the other writers, however, the problem is more complex. Proust had been primarily concerned with a private and personal experience whose extension to other lives was only implicit; but Pound, Eliot, and Joyce all move out beyond the personal into the wider reaches of history—all deal, in one way or another, with the clash of historical perspectives induced by the identification of modern figures and events with various historical or mythological prototypes. This is quite clear in the *Cantos, The Waste Land,* and in *Ulysses,* where the chief source of meaning is the sense of ironic dissimilarity and yet of profound human continuity between the modern protagonists and their long-dead (or only imaginary) exemplars. A similar palimpsest effect is found

in *Nightwood,* where Dr. O'Connor is continually drawing on his "prehistoric memory" for images and metaphors, weaving in the past with the present and identifying the two; and where, even apart from his monologues, the characters are seen in terms of images that depict them as historical embodiments of certain permanent and ahistorical human attitudes.

Allen Tate, in his penetrating essay on the *Cantos,* writes that Ezra Pound's "powerful juxtapositions of the ancient, the Renaissance, and the modern worlds reduce all three elements to an unhistorical miscellany, timeless and without origin."[19] This is called "the peculiarly modern quality of Mr. Pound"; but it is also the "peculiarly modern quality" of all the works we have been considering. They all maintain a continual juxtaposition between aspects of the past and the present so that both are fused in one comprehensive view. Both Tiresias and Dr. O'Connor are focuses of consciousness precisely because they transcend historical limits and encompass all times; the same is true of the unspecified voice intoning the *Cantos.* Leopold Bloom and the other major characters in *Ulysses* are projected in the same fashion, but Joyce, true to the traditions of literary naturalism, refuses to make even the central figure of Bloom more than the *unconscious* bearer of his own immortality.

By this juxtaposition of past and present, as Allen Tate realized, history becomes ahistorical. Time is no longer felt as an objective, causal progression with clearly marked-out differences between periods; now it has become a continuum in which distinctions between past and present are wiped out. And here we have a striking parallel with the plastic arts. Just as the dimension of depth has vanished from the sphere of visual creation, so the dimension of historical depth has vanished from the content of the major works of modern literature. Past and present are apprehended spatially, locked in a timeless unity that, while it may accentuate surface differences, eliminates any feeling of sequence by the very act of juxtaposition. Ever since the Renaissance, modern man has cultivated both the objective visual imagination (the ability to portray space) and the objective historical imagination (the ability to locate events in chronological time); both have now been abandoned.

What has occurred, at least so far as literature is concerned, may be described as the transformation of the historical imagination into myth—an imagination for which historical time does not exist and which sees the actions and events of a particular time only as the bodying forth of eternal prototypes. The historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, has recently noted in modern thought "a resistance to history, a revolt against historical *time,* an attempt to restore this historical time, freighted as it is with human experience, to a place in the time that is cosmic, cyclical, and infinite. In any case," he adds, "it is worth noting that the work of two of the most significant writers of our day—T. S. Eliot and James Joyce—is saturated with nostalgia for the myth of eternal repetition and, in the last analysis, for the abolition of time."[20] These observations from another discipline confirm the view that modern literature has been engaged in transmuting the time world of history into the timeless world of myth. And it is this timeless world of myth, forming the content of so much of modern literature, that finds its appropriate aesthetic expression in spatial form.[21]

Notes

1. André Gide, *Prétextes* (Paris, 1913), 42.

2. This statement is much less true now than it was forty-five years ago when first written. The past half-century has seen a notable increase in studies concerned with the space- and time-aspects of literature and art. As Wellek and Warren have remarked, this was initially attributable to the influence of Existentialist philosophy. For further references, see R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York, 1956), 264.

3. Ezra Pound, *Make It New* (London, 1934), 336.

4. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (New York, 1950), 247.

5. R. P. Blackmur, *The Double Agent* (New York, 1935), 49.

6. Maurice Blanchot, "Le Mythe de Mallarmé," *La Part du Feu* (Paris, 1949).

7. Albert Thibaudet, *Gustave Flaubert* (Paris, 1935), 105.

8. Gustave Flaubert, "Correspondence," vol. 3 (1852–1854), 75, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris, 1947).

9. Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses* (New York, 1952); Harry Levin, *James Joyce* (Norfolk, Conn., 1941), 75.

10. Ramon Fernandez, *Messages* (New York, 1927), 210.

11. The best résumé of this movement may be found in Walter Passarge, *Die Philosophie der Kunstgeschichte in der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1930). A penetrating summary is given by Meyer Schapiro in his article "Style," in *Aesthetics Today,* ed. Morris Philipson (New York, 1961), 81–113.

12. Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (New York, 1953).

13. Ibid., 44.

14. Ibid., 9.

15. T. E. Hulme, *Speculations* (New York, 1924), 113–140.

16. Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy,* 38.

17. Wilhelm Worringer, *Form in Gothic* (London, 1927), 7.

18. Ernst Robert Curtius, *Französischer Geist im XX. Jahrhundert* (Bern, 1952), 352.

19. Allen Tate, *The Man of Letters to the Modern World* (New York, 1955), 262.

20. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York, 1954), 153.

21. A reader who wishes another perspective on the key issues raised in this essay can find a fair and cogent refutation of my position in Walter Sutton's article, "The Literary Image and the Reader," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 16, 1 (1957–58), 112–123.

Mr. Sutton's objections, however, seem to me to be based on a misunderstanding. His major argument is that, since reading is a time-act, the achievement of spatial form is really a physical impossibility. I could not agree more. But this has not stopped modern writers from working out techniques to achieve the impossible—as much as possible.

Part Thirteen

The New Novel, the Postmodern Novel

Although the *nouveau roman* and the postmodern novel are distinct enough in cultural provenance to deserve separate treatment, they're juxtaposed here as broadly representative of the stage in novel theory which immediately succeeds that of modernism. The readings from Alain Robbe-Grillet are selected from brief essays, dating from 1955 to 1963, by the most important exponent of the *nouveau roman* in both practice and theory. Robbe-Grillet's ambivalence about the coherence of the category itself has a central relevance to the problem of a novel tradition, a problem highlighted by the tautology that becomes explicit once the category is anglicized.

For Robbe-Grillet, the new novel replaces the "bourgeois novel" of Balzac. Separating them is a gulf conceived with a finality (if not a chronological exactitude) reminiscent of Woolf's pronouncement forty years earlier.[1] On one side of this divide is the easy segregation of form from content and the confident presumption of stable reference and transparent representation, a naïve investment in verisimilitude that characterizes both Western "academic" realism and Soviet socialist realism. On the other side of the gulf is the "new realism" of description, which, although within the line of descent from Flaubert to Kafka, also goes "beyond" that lineage altogether. "Description . . . once claimed to reproduce a pre-existing reality; it now asserts its creative function." "[I]nvention and imagination become, at the limit, the very subject of the book." "The entire interest of the descriptive pages . . . is therefore no longer in the thing described, but in the very movement of the description." Thus form is thematized as content; similarly, the object becomes subjective: "The objects in our novels never have a presence outside human perception, real or imaginary."

By this account, the new novel may sound very much like the old novel in its classic theorization.[2] How does Robbe-Grillet's invocation of phenomenology sharpen our sense of the innovation he would illuminate? We needn't demand philosophical precision of these essays to infer that Robbe-Grillet would infuse the literary-critical idea of the "description" of objects with the philosophical ambition to "describe phenomena" nonempirically, in their essential properties. To seek the "immediate presence" of objects is to avoid the

1. See "Mr. Bennett," above, pt. 12.

2. E.g., compare Ortega y Gasset on "description" in *Meditations,* above, pt. 5.

"metaphysical transcendence" involved in empirical accounts of the outer surface, which inevitably imply a corollary "inner depth" of meaning. Like object and subject, surface and depth are to be, not abolished, but denied their separability. With this denial comes the denial of "signification" as well, which (like "explanation" and "theorization") exceeds the immediate description of the object. What remains in the wake of signification is not the empirical object (whose very existence entails the duality of signification) but the perceived object, the object in the immediacy of its perception. If this remains a signification, it is at least "partial" and "provisional," one created in the very process of exploration rather than one of the "ready-made meanings" bequeathed by the past.

Although the claim to avoid signification may seem greatly diminished by this adequation of it to the claim to avoid past significations, Robbe-Grillet's acknowledgment here helps moderate the divide between old and new novel on which he elsewhere seems too strongly to insist. If the old and the new novel share a basic generic commitment to principles of distance and reflexivity, can they be seen to differ in the particular techniques by which these general functions are achieved? Woolf's modernism may here provide an instructive foil to Robbe-Grillet's "postmodernism" because his phenomenological revision of "description" bears some similarity to her psychological revision of description as "insight." That is, both reformulate the realist oscillation between subject and object; but they proceed in opposite directions. If Woolf's modernism may be said to objectify the subject—to internalize the realist oscillation within the dialectic of subjectivities—Robbe-Grillet's postmodernism might be seen as subjectifying the object, as internalizing oscillation within the phenomenon-as-it-is-perceived.

The understanding of the novel as a coherent genre is concretized by efforts such as this one to specify how it matches form to matter,[3] that is, to formulate the grounds both of the continuity of its function and of the discontinuity of techniques by which that function is accomplished. As a consequence of the modern imperative to innovate, the unfolding theory of the novel has tended to propound a more absolute discontinuity than this, most strikingly by replicating the sharp division between the traditional and the modern as a decisive rupture within the realm of the modern. In the resulting, three-part periodization, tradition tends to undergo a positive revaluation, and modernity, the middle stage, is opposed by the sophistication of the third stage, which knowingly recapitulates the naïve traditionality of the first; hence the logic of a *post*modernity, which takes over the norm of "neotraditionality" previously claimed by modernism.[4]

I have already remarked on the problem with the three-part chronology that's endemic to the idea of a novel tradition, namely, the lack of sufficient basis for the rupture dividing the third from the second period. It may be useful to point out another perspective on this problem: the incapacity of the third period to renovate the terms of the first. Robbe-Grillet is broadly repre-

3. See above, Guillén, ch. 3.

4. On modernist neotraditionality see above, headnote to pt. II.

sentative of novel theorists in conceiving this renovation as requiring a denial that oppositional categories can be separated by asserting their "dissolutive" conflation: "Today's life, today's science are dissolving many of the categorical antinomies established by the rationalism of past centuries. It is natural that the novel . . . should already be in the process of melting down the terms of other pairs of contraries: matter-form, objectivity-subjectivity, signification-absurdity, construction-destruction, memory-presence, imagination-reality, etc." What's overlooked in all such projections is the dialectical dependence of the third stage on the second—that is, the degree to which dissolution and its results must take their character from the dichotomous opposition they would undo rather than from tradition as such. Given the intimacy of this dependence, in fact, the language of diachronic "stages" itself may obscure the nature of the relationship, hence of modernity itself.

The problem can be clarified if approached from the other direction, that of "tradition." Defined over against "modernity," tradition is sometimes conceived, on a simple and static model, as lacking all impulse toward categorial distinction. We might better think of tradition as a cultural system that acknowledges distinction without countenancing separation. Myth doesn't preexist the distinction between nature and culture: it mobilizes that distinction through "the postulate of a homology between *two systems of differences.*" In the epic world, nature "is nothing other than the historico-philosophical objectivation of man's alienation from his own constructs," and the "affirmation of a dissonance precedes the act of form-giving." "In oral performance communication is inseparable from the other functions of language, which . . . [nonetheless] are epistemologically distinguishable from the communicative act."[5]

Like "tradition," "modernity" has its own complexity that belies the simplicity consequent on a view of their relationship as strictly antithetical. If, in this polarizing view, tradition tends to become static, modernity must evince an utter dynamism manifested in a diachronic proliferation of periods. But diachrony isn't the only dimension of historical difference. For the grand theorists of the novel, the second and third "stages" of the novel tradition, the separation of categories and the effort to overcome that separation, are more or less coterminous, not a diachronic sequence but a synchronic contradiction. The search for home is predicated on homelessness; the approximation of individuality to typicality presupposes their detachment; the parodic suture presumes a conceptual gap between means and object of representation; self-conscious reflexivity grows out of empirical objectivity.

This view gives to the conceptualization of modernity a dialectical complexity that militates against a decisive three-part chronology.[6] If the second and third "stages" of the process—if separation and conflation—are synchronically coimplicated, modernity takes on a contradictory status. Solutions are ineluctably rooted in their problems, but gains are posited through the very

5. Lévi-Strauss, *Savage Mind,* above, ch. 7; Lukács, *Theory,* above, pt. 4; Banfield, above, ch. 22.

6. At the same time, this view encourages more provisional and heuristic periodizations of the modern field; cf. Lukács, *Historical Novel,* above, pt. 4.

logic of loss; and the anticipation of a pristine "dissolution of antinomies" is reserved for a fully and frankly utopian "third stage" that is discerned at best on the imminent horizon, a conceptual illumination not a sociopolitical reality.[7] Theorists who believe in the possibility of overcoming separation altogether,[8] who equate conflation with distinction, are condemned (adapting Santayana) to repeat it unconsciously. In Robbe-Grillet this fate is starkly evident in the way his anti-dichotomizing theory of the new novel evokes (despite but also because of itself) the dichotomizing theory of the contemporaneous New Criticism: inner versus outer, presence versus purpose, necessity versus didacticism, linguistic versus political commitment, art versus society, artist versus critic, practice versus theory.

But if we take seriously the dialectical caveat against the definitive splitting of modernity into two stages, aren't we also obliged to apply it, in the end, to the decisive rupture between modernity and tradition itself? The keystone of the grand theorists, isn't the historical diachrony that divides tradition from modernity, myth-epic-romance from the novel, subject to its own dialectical modification?

The question invites two distinct responses. First, the divide between tradition and modernity, however decisive, marks a point not of radical discontinuity but of dialectical relation, in which discontinuity may be seen to overbalance, but not obliterate, the evidence for continuity. To speak of evidence here is to emphasize that the question is not only theoretical but crucially empirical, calling for a historical demonstration that the argument for overbalance is justified.[9] With respect to narrative form, the best evidence is likely to be superstructural—the evidence (as I have argued) of an epochal shift in attitudes toward the unconditional separability of categories, a shift grounded in a fundamental transition in cultural dominance from norms of imitation to norms of innovation, from norms of precedence to norms of originality and novelty.[10] Second, in theoretical terms the question raises the issue of historical method. Like historical synchrony and its basic articulation into infrastructure and superstructure, historical diachrony requires a two-part differential (whether conceived as tradition-modernity, ancient-modern, B.C.–A.D., past-present, or the like) to be methodologically functional. Any account of the novel genre

7. Compare the status of socialism in Benjamin, ch. 31, and Lukács, ch. 35. The historical diachrony of the novel, hence of modernity itself, is more dialectical in its Marxist formulation than in others in part because Marxism also possesses a dialectical understanding of historical synchrony—both the similarity and the difference between the conceptual and the sociopolitical, the superstructural and the infrastructural.

8. Even more, in the desirability of avoiding separation: if modernity is born under the negative sign of division (of labor, of knowledge), division is also the positive precondition of its promise.

9. For one such effort at empirical demonstration, see Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), ch. 1, 4.

10. "The Enlightenment of modern times advanced from the very beginning under the banner of radicalism; this distinguishes it from any of the earlier stages of demythologization": Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1972), p. 92.

that refuses a basic diachronic differential will be, as both theory and history, incoherent.[11]

Where Lukács provocatively associates vulgar socialist realism with modernism, Robbe-Grillet, with equal provocation, associates it with the "bourgeois" novel of the previous century. Yet in his very repudiation of literary purposiveness Robbe-Grillet is capable of adumbrating a Marxist theory of ideological function, and he invokes Lukács with guarded respect. In the theory of the novel as elsewhere, anti-capitalism can become the facile, all-purpose trope of modern liberation. Robbe-Grillet's fleeting correlation of realism and the "bourgeois" institutions of private property and mass consumption recalls the poststructuralist analogy between realism and commodity fetishism.[12] Even if we ignore its misconstrual of realism as enforcing a "repression of production," however, the analogy has an obvious partiality. If "capitalism" is the fetishism of commodities and the pleasure of passive consumption, it's also the creation of surplus value and the pleasure of endless circulation and exchange. From the latter perspective, to conceive the postmodern text as that which "decants the work from its consumption and gathers it up as play, task, production, and activity"; as "the space . . . in which all languages circulate freely"; as engendering the play of "the perpetual signifier" and practicing "the infinite deferral of the signified"[13]—this poststructuralist conception of the postmodern text may well recall to us the Lukácsian conception of the modernist text: "The reflection of a distortion becomes a distorted reflection." The too-easy equilibration of superstructure and infrastructure can issue in a "cultural materialism" whose crude reflectionism is reductive of both culture and material life.

Linda Hutcheon recognizes the centrality of categorial separation to the status of the postmodern novel. For her the crucial separation is that of literary fiction and history: "[I]t is this very separation of the literary and the historical that is now being challenged in postmodern theory and art." Much of the interest of Hutcheon's essay lies in the difficult issue of delimiting the chronology both of this separation and of the conflation of history and literature by which modernity has sought to overcome it.

The cumbersomeness of Hutcheon's term for the epitome of postmodern

11. For a recent example, see Margaret A. Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

12. See Coward and Ellis, above, ch. 26.

13. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Textual Strategies,* ed. Josué Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 79, 80, 76. Barthes was an enthusiastic champion of Robbe-Grillet's writing: see "Objective Literature: Alain Robbe-Grillet," in *Two Novels by Robbe-Grillet,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 11–25. That poststructuralist theory has been in the forefront of the critique of genre theory and the advocacy of an ahistorical narratology is consistent with its account of the new novel and the postmodern novel—of "the text"—as discontinuous with past practice. But if the postmodern text refuses "to satisfy the myth of filiation" ("From Work to Text"), it only sustains thereby the revolution against genealogical authority initiated by the novel as such. Both this historical continuity of anti-filiation, and the poststructuralist refusal to acknowledge it, mark poststructuralism's own filiation with past practice.

fiction, "historiographic metafiction," owes to her aim to distinguish it from those earlier subgenres that might otherwise be taken to anticipate it, most obviously "historical fiction" or the historical novel. In Hutcheon's analysis, the separation of history from fiction dates from the nineteenth century. But if her reading of Lukács on the historical novel seems defective, this may be the result of an uncertainty about whether that nineteenth-century subgenre, against which she would define postmodern fiction, really exemplifies the separation of history and fiction. The reflexive suffix and prefix ("-ographic," "meta-") exist to suggest an epistemological self-consciousness that's absent without them; but doesn't the very term "historical novel" already imply (for Lukács and in any case) the reflexivity of conflation?

Related problems with Hutcheon's basic claim for the singularity of "historiographic metafiction" arise regarding other recent subgeneric categories—the modernist novel, the nonfiction novel—in which the terminological echo is absent. Moreover the problem persists for Hutcheon as we recede in time, for early modernity and beyond: for the eighteenth-century novel; for Aristotle; even for the Bible and classical epic. Where do we *not* see evidence for both the separation and the conflation of history and fiction? The quandary may be alleviated somewhat by the crucial differentiation between distinction, separation, and conflation. Homer doesn't "blur the line between history and fiction," we might say, because the conceptual distinction with which he works doesn't separate out those categories sufficiently for them to obtain the autonomous integrity presupposed by the notion of a "blurring" conflation.

However, once the separability of history and fiction becomes the cultural working assumption of modernity, it also becomes difficult to discriminate among the modern subgenres as Hutcheon seeks to do because the conflation of categories is the logical extension of their separation. How is the parodic intertextuality of postmodern fiction different from that of *Don Quixote* and its heirs? Commendably willing to confront this sort of question, Hutcheon, despite the basic impulse to establish a definitive difference in kind, is unable to affirm more than an indefinite difference in degree: the postmodern conflation is not unique but simply more "overt," "intense," "obsessive."[14] Indeed, Hutcheon knows that the conflation of categories is inevitably colored by their prior separation: "But the ideology of postmodernism is paradoxical, for it depends upon and draws its power from that which it contests." This is the implication of her frequent observation that postmodern fiction involves both the "installation" and the "subversion" of the history/fiction divide. But what is this paradox if not novelistic realism as such?

14. Nor is this difference in degree, once granted, transparent in its implications. The historical process by which the "forms" of communication become "fetters" upon it (see above, headnote to pt. 12) is neutrally systematic, not normatively evolutionary. That is, a more insistently explicit formal technique may signify not a more skeptical and radical apprehension of crisis but the opposite: a relatively desensitized awareness that requires more crudely forthright methods of articulation than those formerly employed.

37

Alain Robbe-Grillet

From

For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction

The Use of Theory (1955 and 1963)

I am not a theoretician of the novel. I have merely, like all novelists, no doubt, in the past as well as today, been led to make some critical reflections on books I had written, on those I was reading, on those I still plan to write. Most of the time, these reflections were inspired by certain reactions—which seem to me surprising or unwarranted—provoked in the press by my own books.

My novels have not been received, upon publication in France, with unanimous enthusiasm; that is putting it mildly. From the reproachful half-silence that greeted the first (*The Erasers*) to the massive and violent rejection meted out by the newspapers to the second (*The Voyeur*), there was little progress: except for the number of copies printed, which was much larger in the second case. Of course, there was also some praise, here and there, though such appreciations occasionally disconcerted me even more. What most astonished me, in reproaches as in praise, was to encounter in almost every case an implicit—or even explicit—reference to the great novels of the past, which were always held up as the model on which the young writer should keep his eyes fixed.

In the literary magazines, I often found a more serious response. But I was not satisfied to be recognized, enjoyed, studied only by the specialists who had encouraged me from the start; I was eager to write for the "reading public," I resented being considered a "difficult" author. My astonishment, my impatience were probably in proportion to my ignorance of literary circles and their customs. I therefore published, in a politico-literary newspaper with a large circulation (*L'Express*), a series of short articles in which I discussed several ideas that seemed to me no more than obvious: for example, that the novel's forms must evolve in order to remain alive, that Kafka's heroes have only a faint connection with the characters in Balzac, that socialist realism or Sartrean "engagement" are difficult to reconcile with the problematic exercise of literature, as with that of any art.

The result of these articles was not what I expected. They caused some commotion but were declared, by almost everyone, to be both simplistic and silly. Still impelled by the desire to convince, I then reworked the principal points under discussion, developing them in a somewhat longer essay which

appeared in the *Nouvelle Revue Française.* The effect, unfortunately, was no better; and this revision—characterized as a "manifesto"—enshrined me as the theoretician of a new "school" of the novel, from which, of course, nothing good was expected, and to which were eagerly relegated, almost at random, any writers who seemed difficult to classify. "*École du regard,*" "Objective Novel," "*École de Minuit*"—the labels varied; as for the intentions attributed to me, they were, indeed, fantastic: to remove man from the world, to impose my own style on other novelists, to destroy every rule of literary composition, etc.

I attempted in new articles to improve matters by emphasizing the elements that had been most neglected, or most distorted, by the critics. This time I was accused of contradicting, of repudiating myself. . . . Thus, impelled alternately by my own explorations and by my detractors, I continued irregularly, from year to year, to publish my reflections on literature. It is this group of texts that appears in the present volume.

These reflections in no way constitute a theory of the novel; they merely attempt to clarify several lines of development which seem to me crucial in contemporary literature. If in many of the pages that follow, I readily employ the term *New Novel,* it is not to designate a school, nor even a specific and constituted group of writers working in the same direction; the expression is merely a convenient label applicable to all those seeking new forms for the novel, forms capable of expressing (or of creating) new relations between man and the world, to all those who have determined to invent the novel, in other words, to invent man. Such writers know that the systematic repetition of the forms of the past is not only absurd and futile, but that it can even become harmful: by blinding us to our real situation in the world today, it keeps us, ultimately, from constructing the world and man of tomorrow.

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Faced with such [critics'] questions, the novelist's "intelligence" no longer seems to be of any help to him. What he was trying to do is merely this book itself. Which does not mean that he is always satisfied by it; but the work remains, in every case, the best and the only possible expression of his enterprise. If he had had the capacity to furnish a simpler definition, or to reduce his two or three hundred pages to some message in clear language, to explain its functioning word by word—in short, to give a justification for it, he would not have felt the need to write the book. For the function of art is never to illustrate a truth—or even an interrogation—known in advance, but to bring into the world certain interrogations (and also, perhaps, in time, certain answers) not yet known as such to themselves.

The novelist's critical consciousness can be useful to him only on the level of choices, not on that of their justification. He feels the necessity of using a certain form, of rejecting a certain adjective, of constructing this paragraph in a certain way. He puts all his effort into the search for the right word, and for the right place to put it. But of this necessity he can produce no proof (except, occasionally, after the fact). He implores us to believe him, to trust him. And

when we ask him why he has written his book, he has only one answer: "To try and find out why I wanted to write it."

As for saying where the novel is heading, no one, of course, can do so with certainty. Moreover, it is likely that different paths will continue to exist for the novel, in parallel. Yet one such path already seems to be marked more clearly than the rest. From Flaubert to Kafka, a line of descent is drawn, an ancestry that suggests a progeny. That passion to describe, which animates them both, is certainly the same passion we discern in the new novel today. Beyond the naturalism of Flaubert and the metaphysical oneiroticism of Kafka appear the first elements of a realistic style of an unknown genre, which is now coming to light. It is this new realism whose outlines the present collection attempts to describe.

A Future for the Novel (1956)

It seems hardly reasonable at first glance to suppose that an entirely *new* literature might one day—now, for instance—be possible. The many attempts made these last thirty years to drag fiction out of its ruts have resulted, at best, in no more than isolated works. And—we are often told—none of these works, whatever its interest, has gained the adherence of a public comparable to that of the bourgeois novel. The only conception of the novel to have currency today is, in fact, that of Balzac.

Or that of Mme. de La Fayette. Already sacrosanct in her day, psychological analysis constituted the basis of all prose: it governed the conception of the book, the description of its characters, the development of its plot. A "good" novel, ever since, has remained the study of a passion—or of a conflict of passions, or of an absence of passion—in a given milieu. Most of our contemporary novelists of the traditional sort—those, that is, who manage to gain the approval of their readers—could insert long passages from *The Princess of Clèves* or *Père Goriot* into their own books without awakening the suspicions of the enormous public which devours whatever they turn out. They would merely need to change a phrase here and there, simplify certain constructions, afford an occasional glimpse of their own "manner" by means of a word, a daring image, the rhythm of a sentence. . . . But all acknowledge, without seeing anything peculiar about it, that their preoccupations as writers date back several centuries.

What is so surprising about this, after all? The raw material—the French language—has undergone only very slight modifications for three hundred years; and if society has been gradually transformed, if industrial techniques have made considerable progress, our intellectual civilization has remained much the same. We live by essentially the same habits and the same prohibitions—moral, alimentary, religious, sexual, hygienic, etc. And of course there is always the human "heart," which as everyone knows is eternal. There's nothing new under the sun, it's all been said before, we've come on the scene too late, etc., etc.

The risk of such rebuffs is merely increased if one dares claim that this

new literature is not only possible in the future, but is already being written, and that it will represent—in its fulfillment—a revolution more complete than those which in the past produced such movements as romanticism or naturalism.

There is, of course, something ridiculous about such a promise as "Now things are going to be different!" How will they be different? In what direction will they change? And, especially, why are they going to change now?

The art of the novel, however, has fallen into such a state of stagnation—a lassitude acknowledged and discussed by the whole of critical opinion—that it is hard to imagine such an art can survive for long without some radical change. To many, the solution seems simple enough: such a change being impossible, the art of the novel is dying. This is far from certain. History will reveal, in a few decades, whether the various fits and starts which have been recorded are signs of a death agony or of a rebirth.

In any case, we must make no mistake as to the difficulties such a revolution will encounter. They are considerable. The entire caste system of our literary life (from publisher to the humblest reader, including bookseller and critic) has no choice but to oppose the unknown form which is attempting to establish itself. The minds best disposed to the idea of a necessary transformation, those most willing to countenance and even to welcome the values of experiment, remain, nonetheless, the heirs of a tradition. A new form will always seem more or less an absence of any form at all, since it is unconsciously judged by reference to the consecrated forms. In one of the most celebrated French reference works, we may read in the article on Schoenberg: "Author of audacious works, written without regard for any rules whatever!" This brief judgment is to be found under the heading *Music,* evidently written by a specialist.

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Anyone can perceive the nature of the change that has occurred. In the initial novel, the objects and gestures forming the very fabric of the plot disappeared completely, leaving behind only their *significations:* the empty chair became only absence or expectation, the hand placed on a shoulder became a sign of friendliness, the bars on the window became only the impossibility of leaving. . . . But in the cinema, one *sees* the chair, the movement of the hand, the shape of the bars. What they signify remains obvious, but instead of monopolizing our attention, it becomes something added, even something in excess, because what affects us, what persists in our memory, what appears as essential and irreducible to vague intellectual concepts are the gestures themselves, the objects, the movements, and the outlines, to which the image has suddenly (and unintentionally) restored their *reality.*

It may seem peculiar that such fragments of crude reality, which the filmed narrative cannot help presenting, strike us so vividly, whereas identical scenes in real life do not suffice to free us of our blindness. As a matter of fact, it is as if the very conventions of the photographic medium (the two dimensions, the black-and-white images, the frame of the screen, the difference of scale between scenes) help free us from our own conventions. The slightly

"unaccustomed" aspect of this reproduced world reveals, at the same time, the unaccustomed character of the world that surrounds us: it, too, is unaccustomed insofar as it refuses to conform to our habits of apprehension and to our classification.

Instead of this universe of "signification" (psychological, social, functional), we must try, then, to construct a world both more solid and more immediate. Let it be first of all by their *presence* that objects and gestures establish themselves, and let this presence continue to prevail over whatever explanatory theory that may try to enclose them in a system of references, whether emotional, sociological, Freudian or metaphysical.

In this future universe of the novel, gestures and objects will be *there* before being *something;* and they will still be there afterwards, hard, unalterable, eternally present, mocking their own "meaning," that meaning which vainly tries to reduce them to the role of precarious tools, of a temporary and shameful fabric woven exclusively—and deliberately—by the superior human truth expressed in it, only to cast out this awkward auxiliary into immediate oblivion and darkness.

Henceforth, on the contrary, objects will gradually lose their instability and their secrets, will renounce their pseudo-mystery, that suspect interiority which Roland Barthes has called "the romantic heart of things." No longer will objects be merely the vague reflection of the hero's vague soul, the image of his torments, the shadow of his desires. Or rather, if objects still afford a momentary prop to human passions, they will do so only provisionally, and will accept the tyranny of significations only in appearance—derisively, one might say—the better to show how alien they remain to man.

As for the novel's characters, they may themselves suggest many possible interpretations; they may, according to the preoccupations of each reader, accommodate all kinds of comment—psychological, psychiatric, religious, or political—yet their indifference to these "potentialities" will soon be apparent. Whereas the traditional hero is constantly solicited, caught up, destroyed by these interpretations of the author's, ceaselessly projected into an immaterial and unstable *elsewhere,* always more remote and blurred, the future hero will remain, on the contrary, *there.* It is the commentaries that will be left elsewhere; in the face of his irrefutable presence, they will seem useless, superfluous, even improper.

Exhibit X in any detective story gives us, paradoxically, a clear image of this situation. The evidence gathered by the inspectors—an object left at the scene of the crime, a movement captured in a photograph, a sentence overheard by a witness—seem chiefly, at first, to require an explanation, to exist only in relation to their role in a context which overpowers them. And already the theories begin to take shape: the presiding magistrate attempts to establish a logical and necessary link between things; it appears that everything will be resolved in a banal bundle of causes and consequences, intentions and coincidences. . . .

But the story begins to proliferate in a disturbing way: the witnesses con-

tradict one another, the defendant offers several alibis, new evidence appears that had not been taken into account. And we keep going back to the recorded evidence: the exact position of a piece of furniture, the shape and frequency of a fingerprint, the word scribbled in a message. We have the mounting sense that nothing else is *true.* Though they may conceal a mystery, or betray it, these elements which make a mockery of systems have only one serious, obvious quality, which is to *be there.*

The same is true of the world around us. We had thought to control it by assigning it a meaning, and the entire art of the novel, in particular, seemed dedicated to this enterprise. But this was merely an illusory simplification; and far from becoming clearer and closer because of it, the world has only, little by little, lost all its life. Since it is chiefly in its presence that the world's reality resides, our task is now to create a literature which takes that presence into account.

All this might seem very theoretical, very illusory, if something were not actually changing—changing totally, definitively—in our relations with the universe. Which is why we glimpse an answer to the old ironic question, "Why now?" There is today, in fact, a new element that separates us radically this time from Balzac as from Gide or from Mme. de La Fayette: it is the destitution of the old myths of "depth."

We know that the whole literature of the novel was based on these myths, and on them alone. The writer's traditional role consisted in excavating Nature, in burrowing deeper and deeper to reach some ever more intimate strata, in finally unearthing some fragment of a disconcerting secret. Having descended into the abyss of human passions, he would send to the seemingly tranquil world (the world on the surface) triumphant messages describing the mysteries he had actually touched with his own hands. And the sacred vertigo the reader suffered then, far from causing him anguish or nausea, reassured him as to his power of domination over the world. There were chasms, certainly, but thanks to such valiant speleologists, their depths could be sounded.

It is not surprising, given these conditions, that the literary phenomenon par excellence should have resided in the total and unique adjective, which attempted to unite all the inner qualities, the entire hidden soul of things. Thus the word functioned as a trap in which the writer captured the universe in order to hand it over to society.

The revolution which has occurred is in kind: not only do we no longer consider the world as our own, our private property, designed according to our needs and readily domesticated, but we no longer even believe in its "depth." While essentialist conceptions of man met their destruction, the notion of "condition" henceforth replacing that of "nature," the *surface* of things has ceased to be for us the mask of their heart, a sentiment that led to every kind of metaphysical transcendence.

Thus it is the entire literary language that must change, that is changing already. From day to day, we witness the growing repugnance felt by people of greater awareness for words of a visceral, analogical, or incantatory character. On the other hand, the visual or descriptive adjective, the word that contents

itself with measuring, locating, limiting, defining, indicates a difficult but most likely direction for a new art of the novel.

On Several Obsolete Notions (1957)

Traditional criticism has its vocabulary. Though it noisily abstains from offering systematic judgments on literature (claiming, on the contrary, to enjoy this or that work freely, according to such "natural" criteria as good sense, the heart, etc.), one merely needs to read its analyses with a little attention to discover a network of key words, betraying nothing less than a system.

But we are so accustomed to discussions of "character," "atmosphere," "form," and "content," of "message" and "narrative ability" and "true novelists" that it requires an effort to free ourselves from this spider web and realize that it represents an idea about the novel (a ready-made idea, which everyone admits without argument, hence a dead idea), and not at all that so-called "nature" of the novel in which we are supposed to believe.

Even more dangerous, perhaps, are the terms commonly employed to describe the books which escape these accepted rules. The word "avant-garde," for example, despite its note of impartiality, generally serves to dismiss—as though by a shrug of the shoulders—any work that risks giving a bad conscience to the literature of mass consumption. Once a writer renounces the well-worn formulas and attempts to create his own way of writing, he finds himself stuck with the label "avant-garde."

. . . .

Story. A novel, for most readers—and critics—is primarily a "story." A true novelist is one who knows how to "tell a story." The felicity of "telling," which sustains him from one end of his work to the other, is identified with his vocation as a writer. To invent thrilling, moving, dramatic vicissitudes constitutes both his delight and his justification.

Hence to criticize a novel often comes down to reporting its anecdote, more or less briefly, depending on whether one has six columns or two to fill, with more or less emphasis on the essential passages: the climaxes and denouements of the plot. The judgment made on the book will consist chiefly in an appreciation of this plot, of its gradual development, its equilibrium, the expectations or surprises it affords the panting reader. A loophole in the narrative, a clumsily introduced episode, a lag in interest will be the major defects of the book; vivacity and spontaneity its highest virtues.

The writing itself will never be in question. The novelist will merely be praised for expressing himself in correct language, in an agreeable, striking, evocative manner. . . . Thus the style will be no more than a means, a manner; the basis of the novel, its *raison d'être,* what is inside it, is simply the story it tells.

Yet from serious people (those who admit that literature need not be a mere diversion) to the enthusiasts of the worst sentimental, detective, or exotic junk, everyone is in the habit of demanding a particular quality from the anecdote. It is not enough that it be entertaining, or extraordinary, or enthralling;

to have its measure of human truth, it must also succeed in convincing the reader that the adventures he is hearing about have really happened to real characters, and that the novelist is confining himself to reporting, to transmitting events of which he has been the witness. A tacit convention is established between the reader and the author: the latter will pretend to believe in what he is telling, the former will forget that everything is invented and will pretend to be dealing with a document, a biography, a real-life story. To tell a story well is therefore to make what one writes resemble the prefabricated schemas people are used to, in other words, their ready-made idea of reality.

Thus, whatever the unexpected nature of the situations, the accidents, the fortuitous reactions, the narrative must flow without jolts, as though of its own accord, with that irrepressible *élan* which immediately wins our adherence. The least hesitation, the slightest oddity (two contradictory elements, for example, or two that do not exactly match), and unexpectedly the current of the novel ceases to sustain the reader, who suddenly wonders if he is not being "told a story" and who threatens to return to authentic testimonies, about which at least he will not have to ask himself questions as to the verisimilitude of things. Even more than to divert, the issue here is to reassure him.

Lastly, if he wants the illusion to be complete, the novelist is always supposed to know more than he says; the notion of a "slice of life" shows the extent of the knowledge he is supposed to have about what happened before and after. In the very interior of the duration he describes, he must give the impression of offering only the essentials, but of being able, if the reader insisted, to tell much more. The substance of the novel, in the image of reality, must appear inexhaustible.

Lifelike, spontaneous, limitless, the story must, in a word, be natural. Unfortunately, even while admitting that there is still something "natural" in the relations of man and the world, it turns out that writing, like any form of art, is on the contrary an invention. What constitutes the novelist's strength is precisely that he invents, that he invents quite freely, without a model. The remarkable thing about modern fiction is that it asserts this characteristic quite deliberately, to such a degree that invention and imagination become, at the limit, the very subject of the book.

And no doubt such a development constitutes only one of the aspects of the general change in the relations man sustains with the world in which he lives. The narrative, as our academic critics conceive it—and many readers after them—represents an order. This order, which we may in effect qualify as natural, is linked to an entire rationalistic and organizing system, whose flowering corresponds to the assumption of power by the middle class. In that first half of the nineteenth century which saw the apogee—with *The Human Comedy*—of a narrative form which understandably remains for many a kind of paradise lost of the novel, certain important certainties were in circulation: in particular the confidence in a logic of things that was just and universal.

All the technical elements of the narrative—systematic use of the past tense and the third person, unconditional adoption of chronological development, linear plots, regular trajectory of the passions, impulse of each episode

toward a conclusion, etc.—everything tended to impose the image of a stable, coherent, continuous, unequivocal, entirely decipherable universe. Since the intelligibility of the world was not even questioned, to tell a story did not raise a problem. The style of the novel could be innocent.

But then, with Flaubert, everything begins to vacillate. A hundred years later, the whole system is no more than a memory; and it is to that memory, to that dead system, that some seek with all their might to keep the novel fettered. Yet here, too, it is enough to read the great novels of the beginning of our century to realize that, while the disintegration of the plot has become insistently clearer in the course of the last few years, the plot itself had long since ceased to constitute the armature of the narrative. The demands of the anecdote are doubtless less constraining for Proust than for Flaubert, for Faulkner than for Proust, for Beckett than for Faulkner. . . . Henceforth, the issue is elsewhere. To tell a story has become strictly impossible.

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Commitment

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Indeed, from the viewpoint of the Revolution, everything must directly contribute to the final goal: the liberation of the proletariat. . . . Everything, including literature, painting, etc. But for the artist, on the contrary, and despite his firmest political convictions—even despite his good will as a militant revolutionary—art cannot be reduced to the status of a means in the service of a cause which transcends it, even if this cause were the most deserving, the most exalting; the artist puts nothing above his work, and he soon comes to realize that he can create only *for nothing;* the least external directive paralyzes him, the least concern for didacticism, or even for signification, is an insupportable constraint; whatever his attachment to his party or to generous ideas, the moment of creation can only bring him back to the problems of his art, and to them alone.

Yet, even at the moment when art and society, after comparable flowerings, seem to be experiencing parallel crises, it remains obvious that the problems each raises cannot be solved in the same manner. Later on, no doubt, sociologists will discover in the solutions new similarities. But for us, in any case, we must acknowledge honestly, clearly, that the struggle is not the same one, and that, today as always, there is a direct antagonism between the two points of view. Either art is nothing; and in that case, painting, literature, sculpture, music can be enrolled in the service of the revolutionary cause; they will then no longer be anything but instruments, comparable to motorized armies, to mechanized tools, to agricultural tractors; only their direct and immediate effectiveness will count.

Or else art will continue to exist as art; and in that case, for the artist at least, it will remain *the most important thing in the world.* Vis-à-vis political action, it will then always appear somewhat backward, useless, even frankly reactionary. Yet we know that in the history of peoples, art alone, this suppos-

edly gratuitous art, will find its place, perhaps at the side of the trade unions and the barricades.

Meanwhile, that generous but utopian way of talking about a novel, a painting, or a statue as if they might count for as much in everyday action as a strike, a mutiny, or the cry of a victim denouncing his executioners, is a disservice, ultimately, to both Art and Revolution. Too many such confusions have been perpetrated, in recent years, in the name of socialist realism. The total artistic indigence of the works which insist on its tenets is certainly not the effect of chance: the very notion of a work created *for* the expression of a social, political, economic, or moral content constitutes a lie.

Hence we must now, once and for all, stop taking seriously the accusations of gratuitousness, stop fearing "art for art's sake" as the worst of evils; we must challenge this terrorist apparatus brandished under our noses as soon as we speak of anything besides the class struggle or the anticolonialist war.

Yet not everything was condemnable a priori in that Soviet theory of "socialist realism." In literature, for example, was there not also a reaction against an accumulation of false philosophy which had finally invaded everything, from poetry to the novel? Opposing metaphysical allegories, struggling against abstract "higher worlds" which they imply, as well as against verbal delirium without an object or a vague sentimentalism of the passions, socialist realism could have a healthy influence.

Here the deceptive ideologies and the myths no longer have any currency. Literature simply reveals the situation of man and of the universe with which he is at grips. Along with the earthly "values" of bourgeois society disappear the magical, religious, or philosophical recourses to any spiritual transcendence of our visible world. The themes of despair or absurdity, now fashionable, are denounced as alibis that are too easy. Thus Ilya Ehrenburg did not hesitate to write immediately after the war: "Anxiety is a bourgeois vice. As for us, we are rebuilding."

There was every reason to hope, given such principles, that man and things would be cleansed of their systematic *romanticism,* to adopt the term so dear to Lukács, and that at last they could be merely *what they are.* Reality would no longer be constantly situated elsewhere, but *here and now,* without ambiguity. The world would no longer find its justification in a hidden meaning, whatever it might be, its existence would no longer reside anywhere but in its concrete, solid, material presence; beyond what we see (what we perceive by our senses) there would henceforth be nothing.

Now let us consider the result. What does socialist realism offer us? Obviously, this time, the good are the good and the wicked the wicked. But precisely, the insistence that this be obvious has nothing to do with what we observe in the world. What progress is made if, in order to escape the doubling of appearances and essences, we fall into a Manicheism of good and evil?

Worse still: when, in less naïve narratives, we find ourselves reading about believable men, in a complex world endowed with a sensuous existence, we soon realize in spite of everything that these men have been constructed with a view to an interpretation. Moreover, their authors do not hide it: their primary

concern is to illustrate, with the utmost precision, certain historical, economic, social, political behavior.

Yet from the viewpoint of literature, economic truths, Marxist theories of surplus value and usurpation are also abstract "higher worlds." Leftist novels are to have a reality only in relation to these functional explanations of the visible world—explanations prepared in advance, tested, acknowledged—it is difficult to see what their power of discovery or invention can be; and above all, this would be only one more way of denying the world its most certain quality: the simple fact that it is there. An explanation, whatever it may be, can only be *in excess,* confronted with the presence of things. A theory of their social function, if it has governed their description, can only confuse their outline, falsify them in exactly the same way as the old psychological and moral theories, or the symbolism of metaphysical allegories.

Which explains, ultimately, why socialist realism has no need of any experiment in novelistic form, why it so mistrusts any innovation in the technique of the arts, why what suits it best, as we see every day, is the most "bourgeois" expression.

But for some time, an uneasiness has been growing in Russia and in the Peoples' Republics. The leaders are coming to understand that they have taken the wrong path, and that despite appearances, the so-called "laboratory" experiments with the structure and language of the novel, even if they interest only specialists at first, are perhaps not so futile as the party of the Revolution affects to believe.

Then what remains of commitment? Sartre, who had seen the danger of this moralizing literature, advocated a *moral* literature, which claimed only to awaken political awareness by stating the problems of our society, but which would escape the spirit of propaganda by returning the reader to his liberty. Experience has shown that this too was a utopia: once there appears the concern to signify something (something external to art), literature begins to retreat, to disappear.

Let us, then, restore to the notion of commitment the only meaning it can have for us. Instead of being of a political nature, commitment is, for the writer, the full awareness of the present problems of his own language, the conviction of their extreme importance, the desire to solve them *from within.* Here, for him, is the only chance of remaining an artist and, doubtless too, by means of an obscure and remote consequence, of some day serving something—perhaps even the Revolution.

Form and Content. One thing must trouble the partisans of socialist realism, and that is the precise resemblance of their arguments, their vocabulary, their values to those of the most hardened bourgeois critics. For example, in the matter of separating the "form" of a novel from its "contents," that is, of contrasting the *style* (choice of words and their arrangement, use of grammatical tenses and persons, structure of the narrative, etc.) with the anecdote it serves to report (events, actions of the characters, their motivations, morality implied or revealed).

Only the doctrine differs, between the academic literature of the West

and that of the nations of the East. Moreover, it does not differ as much as either side claims. The story told remains in any case (acording to their common optic) the important thing; a good novelist remains the one who invents splendid stories or who tells them best; thus the "great" novel, in either case, is merely one whose signification transcends its anecdote, transcends it in the direction of a profound human truth, a morality, or a metaphysic.

Hence it is natural that the accusation of "formalism" should be one of the most serious in the mouths of our critics on both sides. Here again, in spite of all they say, the word reveals a systematic decision about the novel; and here again, for all its "natural" look, the system conceals the worst abstractions—if not the worst absurdities. Further, we can discern in it a certain contempt for literature, implicit but flagrant, which is as surprising coming from its official champions—the defenders of art and tradition—as from those who have made of mass culture their favorite warhorse.

What, precisely, do they mean by formalism? Clearly enough, what is meant is an excessively marked concern for form—and, in the specific instance, for the technique of the novel—at the expense of the story and of its meaning, its signification. That leaky old boat—the academic opposition of form and content—has not yet been entirely scuttled.

In fact, quite the contrary, it seems that this stock notion has broken out more virulently than ever. If we encounter the reproach of formalism under the pens of the worst enemies reconciled on this point (enthusiasts of belles-lettres and the minions of Zhdanov), it is obviously not the result of a fortuitous encounter; they are in agreement on at least one essential point: to deny art its principal condition of existence, freedom. On one hand they choose to see literature only as one more instrument in the service of the Socialist Revolution, on the other, they require it to express that vague humanism which has survived the heyday of a society now on the wane, of which they are the last defenders.

In both cases, the point is to reduce the novel to a signification external to it, to make the novel a means of achieving some value which transcends it, some spiritual or terrestrial "beyond," future Happiness or eternal Truth. Whereas if art is something, it is *everything,* which means that it must be self-sufficient, and that there is nothing *beyond.*

There is a famous Russian cartoon in which a hippopotamus, in the bush, points out a zebra to another hippopotamus: "You see," he says, "now that's formalism." The existence of a work of art, its weight, are not at the mercy of interpretative grids which may or may not coincide with its contours. The work of art, like the world, is a living form: it *is,* it has no need of justification. The zebra is real, to deny it would not be reasonable, though its stripes are doubtless meaningless. The same is true of a symphony, a painting, a novel: it is in their form that their reality resides.

But—and this is where our socialist realists must beware—it is also in their form that their meaning resides, their "profound signification," that is, their content. There are not, for a writer, two possible ways to write the same book. When he thinks of a future novel, it is always a *way of writing* which

first of all occupies his mind, and demands his hand. He has in mind certain rhythms of sentences, certain architectures, a vocabulary, certain grammatical constructions, exactly as a painter has in mind certain lines and colors. What will happen in the book comes afterward, as though secreted by the style itself. And, once the work is concluded, what will strike the reader is again this form so many affect to despise, a form whose meaning he often cannot define in any exact way, but which for him will constitute the writer's individual world.

We can make the experiment with any important work of our literature. Take *The Stranger,* for instance. It suffices to change the tense of its verbs, to replace that first person in the perfect tense (whose quite uncustomary use extends throughout the narrative) by the usual third person in the past tense, for Camus' universe to disappear at once, and all the interest of his book with it; as it suffices to change the arrangement of the words, in *Madame Bovary,* for there to be nothing left of Flaubert.

Whence the embarrassment we feel in the "committed" novels which claim to be revolutionary because they treat the condition of the workers and the problems of socialism. Their literary form, which generally dates from before 1848, makes them the most backward of bourgeois novels: their real signification, which is quite evident upon reading, the values they enjoin, are identical to those of our capitalist nineteenth century, with its humanitarian ideals, its morality, its mixture of rationalism and spirituality.

Thus it is the style, the *écriture,* and it alone which is "responsible," to adopt a word so often abused by those who accuse us of betraying our mission as writers. To speak of the content of a novel as something independent of its form comes down to striking the genre as a whole from the realm of art. For the work of art contains nothing, in the strict sense of the term (that is, as a box can hold—or be empty of—some object of an alien nature). Art is not a more or less brilliantly colored envelope intended to embellish the author's "message," a gilt paper around a package of cookies, a whitewash on a wall, a sauce that makes the fish go down easier. Art endures no servitude of this kind, nor any other pre-established function. It is based on no truth that exists before it; and one may say that it expresses nothing but itself. It creates its own equilibrium and its own meaning. It stands all by itself, like the zebra; or else it falls.

We thus see the absurdity of that favorite expression of our traditional criticism: "X has something to say and says it well." Might we not advance on the contrary that the genuine writer has nothing to say? He has only a way of speaking. He must create a world, but starting from nothing, from the dust. . . .

It is then the reproach of "gratuitousness" which is lodged against us, on the pretext that we assert our nondependence. Art for art's sake does not have a good press: it suggests a game, imposture, dilettantism. But the *necessity* a work of art acknowledges has nothing to do with utility. It is an internal necessity, which obviously appears as gratuitousness when the system of references is fixed *from without:* from the viewpoint of the Revolution, for example, as we have said, the highest art may seem a secondary, even absurd enterprise.

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New Novel, New Man (1961)

A great deal has been written about the "New Novel" in the last few years. Unfortunately, among the criticism that has been lavished upon it, and also, frequently, among the praise, there have been so many extreme simplifications, so many errors, so many misunderstandings, that a kind of monstrous myth has been promulgated in the mind of the public at large, for whom, apparently, the New Novel is henceforth precisely the opposite of what it is for us.

And so it will suffice for me to pass in review the most obvious of these absurd notions that circulate from pen to mouth with regard to the New Novel, in order to give a good idea of the general program of our movement's actual enterprise: each time that general supposition, or the specialized criticism which both reflects and sustains it, attributes an intention to us, it can be asserted without much risk of error that our intention is exactly the contrary.

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The New Novel is interested only in man and in his situation in the world. Since there were not, in our books, "characters" in the traditional sense of the word, it was concluded, somewhat hastily, that men were not to be found there at all. This was to read them very badly indeed. Man is present on every page, in every line, in every word. Even if many objects are presented and are described with great care, there is always, and especially, the eye which sees them, the thought which reexamines them, the passion which distorts them. The objects in our novels never have a presence outside human perception, real or imaginary; they are objects comparable to those in our daily lives, as they occupy our minds at every moment.

And, if the object is taken in its general sense (object, according to the dictionary: whatever affects the senses), it is natural that there should be only objects in my books: there is also, in my life, the furniture in my room, the words I hear, or the woman I love, that woman's gestures, etc. And, in a broader sense (object, according to the dictionary once again: whatever preoccupies the mind), objects will be, further, memory (by which I turn back to past objects), intention (which projects me toward future objects: if I decide to go swimming, I already see the beach and the sea in my mind), and every form of imagination.

As for what is called more precisely *things,* there have always been many of them in the novel. Recall Balzac: houses, furnishings, clothes, jewels, tools, machines, everything described with a care which has nothing to envy in modern works. If such objects are, as it is said, more "human" than ours, it is only—and we shall come back to this—that man's situation in the world he inhabits is no longer the same today as it was a hundred years ago. And not at all because our description is too neutral, too objective, since in fact it is not "neutral" at all.

The New Novel aims only at a total subjectivity. Since there were many objects in our books, and since there was something unaccustomed

about them, a special meaning was quickly attached to the word "objectivity," uttered in their regard by certain critics, though in a very special sense: oriented toward the object. Taken in its habitual sense—neutral, cold, impartial—the word became an absurdity. Not only is it *a man* who, in my novels for instance, describes everything, but it is the least neutral, the least impartial of men: *always* engaged, on the contrary, in an emotional adventure of the most obsessive kind, to the point of often distorting his vision and of producing imaginings close to delirium.

Hence it is easy to show that my novels—like those of all my friends—are more subjective in fact than Balzac's, for example. Who is describing the world in Balzac's novels? Who is that omniscient, omnipresent narrator appearing everywhere at once, simultaneously seeing the outside and the inside of things, following both the movements of a face and the impulses of conscience, knowing the present, the past, and the future of every enterprise? It can only be a God.

It is God alone who can claim to be objective. While in our books, on the contrary, it is *a man* who sees, who feels, who imagines, a man located in space and time, conditioned by his passions, a man like you and me. And the book reports nothing but his experience, limited and uncertain as it is. It is a man here, now, who is his own narrator, finally.

It is doubtless sufficient to cease blinding oneself to this evident truth to realize that our books are within the grasp of any reader, once he agrees to free himself from ready-made ideas, in literature as in life.

The New Novel is addressed to all men of good faith. For what is at issue here is an experience of life, not reassuring—and at the same time despairing—schemas which try to limit the damages and to assign a conventional order to our existence, to our passions. Why seek to reconstruct the time of clocks in a narrative which is concerned only with human time? Is it not wiser to think of our own memory, which is *never* chronological? Why persist in discovering what an individual's name is in a novel which does not supply it? Every day we meet people whose names we do not know, and we can talk to a stranger for a whole evening, when we have not even paid any attention to the introductions made by the hostess.

Our books are written with the words, the phrases of everyone, of every day. They afford no special difficulty to those who are not trying to paste on them a grid of dated interpretations which have already ceased to be valid for nearly fifty years. We may even inquire if a certain literary culture, in fact, does not make it more difficult to understand them: a culture which came to an end around 1900. While quite simple people, who do not know Kafka perhaps, but who are also not beclouded by the Balzacian forms, find themselves able to deal with books in which they recognize the world they live in and their own thoughts, and which, instead of deceiving them as to the signification of their existence, will help them to consider it more lucidly.

The New Novel does not propose a ready-made signification. Which brings us to the major question: does our life have a meaning?

What is it? What is man's place on earth? We see at once why the Balzacian objects were so reassuring: they belonged to a world of which man was the master; such objects were chattels, properties, which it was merely a question of possessing, or retaining, or acquiring. There was a constant identity between these objects and their owner: a simple waistcoat was already a character and a social position at the same time. Man was the reason for all things, the key to the universe, and its natural master, by divine right. . . .

Not much of all this is left today. While the bourgeois class was gradually losing its justifications and its prerogatives, thought was abandoning its essentialist bases, phenomenology was increasingly occupying the whole field of philosophical investigations, the physical sciences were discovering the realm of the discontinuous, psychology itself was undergoing, in a parallel fashion, a transformation just as total.

The significations of the world around us are no more than partial, provisional, even contradictory, and always contested. How could the work of art claim to illustrate a signification known in advance, whatever it might be? The modern novel, as we said at the start, is an exploration, but an exploration which itself creates its own significations, as it proceeds. Does reality have a meaning? The contemporary artist cannot answer this question: he knows nothing about it. All he can say is that this reality will perhaps have a meaning after he has existed, that is, once the work is brought to its conclusion.

Why regard this as a pessimism? In any case, it is the contrary of a renunciation. We no longer believe in the fixed significations, the ready-made meanings which afforded man the old divine order and subsequently the rationalist order of the nineteenth century, but we project onto man all our hopes: it is the forms man creates which can attach significations to the world.

The only possible commitment for the writer is literature. It is not reasonable, henceforth, to claim in our novels to serve a political cause, even a cause which seems just to us, even if in our political life we advocate its victory. Political life ceaselessly obliges us to assume certain known significations: social, historical, moral. Art is more modest—or more ambitious: in art, nothing is ever known in advance.

Before the work of art, there is nothing—no certainty, no thesis, no message. To believe that the novelist has "something to say" and that he then looks for a way to say it represents the gravest of misconceptions. For it is precisely this "way," this manner of speaking, which constitutes his enterprise as a writer, an enterprise more obscure than any other, and which will later be the uncertain content of his book. Ultimately it is perhaps this uncertain content of an obscure enterprise of form which will best serve the cause of freedom. But who knows how long that will take?

Time and Description in Fiction Today (1963)

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Let us admit, first of all, that description is not a modern invention. The great French novels of the nineteenth century in particular, Balzac's first of all, are

crammed with houses, furnishings, costumes, exhaustively and scrupulously described, not to mention faces, bodies, etc. And it is certain that such descriptions have as their goal to make the reader see, and that they succeed in doing so. It was then generally a question of establishing a setting, of defining the context of the action, of presenting the physical appearance of the protagonists. The weight of things thus posited in a precise fashion constituted a stable and certain universe, to which one could then refer, and which guaranteed by its resemblance to the "real" world the authenticity of the events, the words, the gestures which the novelist would cause to occur there. The calm assurance with which the arrangement of sites, the decoration of interiors, the style of costumes were established, as also the social or characterological signs contained in each element and by which the latter justified its presence, finally the proliferation of these precise details on which it seemed that one could draw indefinitely, all this could only convince the reader of the objective existence—outside literature—of a world which the novelist seemed merely to reproduce, to copy, to transmit, as if one were dealing with a chronicle, a biography, a document of some kind.

This world of the novel lived, indeed, the same life as its model: in it one followed in the wake of the years. Not only from one chapter to the next, but often at the first encounter, it was easy to recognize in the most modest domestic object, in the least feature of a countenance, the patina created by use, the erosion caused by time.

Thus this setting was already the image of man: each of the walls or the furnishings of the house represented a double of the person who inhabited it—rich or poor, severe or vainglorious—and was in addition subject to the same destiny, to the same fatality. The reader overly concerned to know the story could even consider himself justified in skipping the descriptions: they involved only a frame, which moreover happened to have a meaning identical to that of the picture it was to contain.

Obviously, when this same reader skips the descriptions in our books, he is in danger of finding himself, having turned all the pages one after the other with a rapid forefinger, at the end of the volume whose contents will have escaped him altogether; imagining he has been dealing hitherto with nothing but the frame, he will still be looking for the picture.

This is because the place and the role of description have changed completely. While the preoccupations of a descriptive order were invading the entire novel, they were at the same time losing their traditional meaning. Preliminary definitions are no longer in question. Description once served to situate the chief contours of a setting, then to cast light on some of its particularly revealing elements; it no longer mentions anything except insignificant objects, or objects which it is concerned to make so. It once claimed to reproduce a pre-existing reality; it now asserts its creative function. Finally, it once made us see things, now it seems to destroy them, as if its intention to discuss them aimed only at blurring their contours, at making them incomprehensible, at causing them to disappear altogether.

It is not rare, as a matter of fact, in these modern novels, to encounter a description that starts from nothing; it does not afford, first of all, a general

view, it seems to derive from a tiny fragment without importance—what most resembles a *point*—starting from which it invents lines, planes, an architecture; and such description particularly seems to be inventing its object when it suddenly contradicts, repeats, corrects itself, bifurcates, etc. Yet we begin to glimpse something, and we suppose that this something will now become clearer. But the lines of the drawing accumulate, grow heavier, cancel one another out, shift, so that the image is jeopardized as it is created. A few paragraphs more and, when the description comes to an end, we realize that it has left nothing behind it: it has instituted a double movement of creation and destruction which, moreover, we also find in the book on all levels and in particular in its total structure—whence the *disappointment* inherent in many works of today.

The concern for precision which sometimes borders on the delirious (those notions so nonvisual as "right" and "left," those calculations, those measurements, those geometric points of reference) does not manage to keep the world from moving even in its most material aspects, and even at the heart of its apparent immobility. It is no longer a question here of time passing, since gestures paradoxically are on the contrary shown only frozen in the moment. It is matter itself which is both solid and unstable, both present and imagined, alien to man and constantly being invented in man's mind. The entire interest of the descriptive pages—that is, man's place in these pages—is therefore no longer in the thing described, but in the very movement of the description.

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From Realism to Reality (1955 and 1963)

All writers believe they are realists. None ever calls himself abstract, illusionistic, chimerical, fantastic, falsitical. . . . Realism is not a theory, defined without ambiguity, which would permit us to counter certain writers by certain others; it is, on the contrary, a flag under which the enormous majority—if not all—of today's novelists enlist. And no doubt we must believe them all, on this point. It is the real world which interests them; each one attempts as best as can to create "the real."

But if they are mustered under this flag, it is not to wage common combat there; it is in order to tear one another to pieces. Realism is the ideology which each brandishes against his neighbor, the quality which each believes he possesses for himself alone. And it has always been the same: out of a concern for realism each new literary school has sought to destroy the one which preceded it; this was the watchword of the romantics against the classicists, then of the naturalists against the romantics; the surrealists themselves declared in their turn that they were concerned only with the real world. Realism, among writers, seems as widely distributed as "common sense" according to Descartes.

And, here too, we must conclude that all of them are right. If they do not understand each other, it is because each one has different ideas about reality. The classicists believed that it is classical, the romantics that it is romantic, the surrealists that it is surreal, Claudel that it is of a divine nature, Camus

that it is absurd, the "committed" writers that it is chiefly economic and tends toward socialism. Each speaks of the world as he sees it, but no one sees it in the same way.

It is easy, moreover, to understand why literary revolutions have always been made in the name of realism. When a form of writing has lost its initial vitality, its force, its violence, when it has become a vulgar recipe, an academic mannerism which its followers respect only out of routine or laziness, without even questioning its necessity, then it is indeed a return to the real which constitutes the arraignment of the dead formulas and the search for new forms capable of continuing the effort. The discovery of reality will continue only if we abandon outworn forms. Unless we suppose that the world is henceforth entirely discovered (and, in that case, the wisest thing would be to stop writing altogether), we can only attempt to go farther. It is not a question of "doing better," but of advancing in ways as yet unknown, in which a new kind of writing becomes necessary.

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But there is something more serious involved. As we have already had occasion to specify in the course of this work, the novel is not a tool at all. It is not conceived with a view to a task defined in advance. It does not serve to set forth, to translate things existing before it, outside it. It does not express, it explores, and what it explores is itself.

Academic criticism in the West, as in the Communist countries, employs the word "realism" as if reality were already entirely constituted (whether for good and all, or not) when the writer comes on the scene. Thus it supposes that the latter's role is limited to "explaining" and to "expressing" the reality of his period.

Realism, according to this point of view, merely requires from the novel that it respect the truth. The author's qualities would be, chiefly, perspicacity in observation and the constant concern for plain speaking (often allied to plain speech). Apart from socialist realism's absolute repugnance for adultery and sexual deviations, it would then be a matter of the unveiled representation of harsh or painful scenes (without fear, O Irony, of shocking the reader!), with, of course, particular attention to the problems of material life and chiefly to the domestic difficulties of the poorer classes. The factory and the shantytown would thus, by nature, be more "realistic" than idleness and luxury, adversity more realistic than happiness. It would be a matter, in short, of merely giving the world certain colors and a signification stripped of prettiness, following a more or less bastardized formula of Emile Zola.

Now all this has scarcely any meaning the moment we realize that not only does each of us see in the world his own reality, but that the novel is precisely what creates it. The style of the novel does not seek to inform, as does the chronicle, the testimony offered in evidence, or the scientific report, it *constitutes* reality. It never knows what it is seeking, it is ignorant of what it has to say; it is invention, invention of the world and of man, constant inven-

tion and perpetual interrogation. All those—politicians and others—who ask of a book only stereotypes, and who fear above all the spirit of contestation, can only mistrust literature.

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In this new realism, it is therefore no longer *verisimilitude* that is at issue. The little detail which "rings true" no longer holds the attention of the novelist, in the spectacle of the world or in literature; what strikes him—and what we recognize after many avatars in his writing—is more likely, on the contrary, the little detail that rings *false.*

Thus, even in Kafka's diaries, when the writer notes down what he has noticed during the day in the course of a walk, he retains merely fragments which are not only without importance, but further, which seem to him cut off from their signification, hence from their *verisimilitude:* the stone abandoned for no good reason in the middle of a street, the bizarre gesture of a passer-by, incomplete, clumsy, not seeming to correspond to any function or precise intention. Partial objects, detached from their use, moments immobilized, words separated from their context, or cross-conversations, whatever rings a little false, that lacks "naturalness"—it is precisely this which rings truest to the novelist's ear.

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There remains, then, that immediate signification of things (descriptive, partial, always contested)—in other words, the signification which takes its place within the story, the anecdote of the book, as the profound (transcendent) signification takes its place outside it. It is on this immediate signification that the effort of exploration and creation will henceforth be brought to bear. From it, as a matter of fact, there can be no question of freeing oneself, or else we risk seeing the anecdote take over, and soon even transcendence (metaphysics loves a vacuum, and rushes into it like smoke up a chimney); for, within immediate signification, we find the absurd, which is theoretically nonsignification, but which as a matter of fact leads immediately, by a well-known metaphysical recuperation, to a new transcendence; and the infinite fragmentation of immediate meaning thus establishes a new totality, quite as dangerous, quite as futile. Even within signification, there is nothing left but the sound of words.

But the various levels of signification of language which we have just remarked have among them many interferences. And it is likely that the new realism will destroy certain of these theoretical oppositions. Today's life, today's science are dissolving many of the categorical antinomies established by the rationalism of past centuries. It is natural that the novel, which, like every art, claims to precede systems of thought and not to follow them, should already be in the process of melting down the terms of other pairs of contraries: matter-form, objectivity-subjectivity, signification-absurdity, construction-destruction, memory-presence, imagination-reality, etc.

It is repeated, by the extreme Right as by the extreme Left, that this new art is unhealthy, decadent, inhuman, and black. But the good health to which

this judgment alludes is that of blinkers and formaldehyde, that of death. One is always decadent in comparison to things of the past: reinforced concrete in comparison to stone, socialism in comparison to paternalist monarchy, Proust in comparison to Balzac. And it is scarcely being inhuman to want to build a new life for man; such a life looks black only if—still mourning the old colors—we do not try to see the new beauties which illuminate it. What today's art proposes to the reader, to the spectator, is in any case a way of living in the present world, and of participating in the permanent creation of tomorrow's world. In order to succeed in this, the New Novel merely asks the public to have some confidence, still, in the power of literature, and it asks the novelist to be ashamed no longer of producing it.

A very widespread idea concerning the New Novel—one that has existed ever since articles were first written about it—is that it is a "passing fashion." This opinion, when one thinks about it a little, appears doubly preposterous. Even by identifying a certain kind of writing with a fashion (and there are always, certainly, followers who sniff the wind and imitate the modern forms without feeling their necessity, without even understanding their functioning, and of course without seeing that their handling requires at least some rigor), the New Novel would be, at worst, the movement of fashions, which destroy themselves as they develop in order to engender, continually, new ones. And that the forms of the novel change and pass is precisely what the New Novel is saying!

We find in this kind of remark—on the passing fashion, the pacification of the rebellious, the return to the healthy tradition, and other nonsense—only the good old attempt to prove, imperturbably, desperately, that "deep down nothing ever changes" and that "there is never anything new under the sun"; whereas in truth *everything is constantly changing* and *there is always something new.* Academic criticism would even like to make the public believe that the new techniques will simply be absorbed by the "eternal" novel and will some day serve to perfect some detail of the Balzacian character, of the chronological plot, and of a transcendent humanism.

It is possible that this day will come, as a matter of fact, and even quite soon. But once the New Novel begins "serving some purpose," whether psychological analysis, or the Catholic novel, or socialist realism, this will be the signal to the inventors that a New Novel is seeking to appear, and no one will yet know what it might serve—except literature.

38

Linda Hutcheon

Historiographic Metafiction

I

We theoreticians have to know the laws of the peripheral in art. The peripheral is, in fact, the non-esthetic set. It is connected with art, but the connection is not causal. But to stay alive, art must have new raw materials. Infusions of the peripheral.

Victor Shklovsky

In the nineteenth century, at least before the rise of Ranke's "scientific history," literature and history were considered branches of the same tree of learning, a tree which sought to "interpret experience, for the purpose of guiding and elevating man" (Nye 1966, 123). Then came the separation that resulted in the distinct disciplines of literary and historical studies today, despite the fact that the realist novel and Rankean historicism shared many similar beliefs about the possibility of writing factually about observable reality (H. White 1976, 25). However, it is this very separation of the literary and the historical that is now being challenged in postmodern theory and art, and recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ. They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. But these are also the implied teachings of historiographic metafiction. Like those recent theories of both history and fiction, this kind of novel asks us to recall that history and fiction are themselves historical terms and that their definitions and interrelations are historically determined and vary with time (see Seamon 1983, 212–16).

In the last century, as Barbara Foley has shown, historical writing and historical novel writing influenced each other mutually: Macauley's debt to Scott was an overt one, as was Dickens's to Carlyle in *A Tale of Two Cities* (Foley 1986, 170–1). Today, the new skepticism or suspicion about the writing of history found in the work of Hayden White and Dominick LaCapra is mirrored in the internalized challenges to historiography in novels like *Shame, The Public Burning,* or *A Maggot:* they share the same questioning stance toward their common use of conventions of narrative, of reference, of the inscribing of sub-

jectivity, of their identity as textuality, and even of their implication in ideology. In both fiction and history writing today, our confidence in empiricist and positivist epistemologies has been shaken—shaken, but perhaps not yet destroyed. And this is what accounts for the skepticism rather than any real denunciation; it also accounts for the defining paradoxes of postmodern discourses. I have been arguing that postmodernism is a contradictory cultural enterprise, one that is heavily implicated in that which it seeks to contest. It uses and abuses the very structures and values it takes to task. Historiographic metafiction, for example, keeps distinct its formal auto-representation and its historical context, and in so doing problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here—just unresolved contradiction, as we have just seen in the last chapter.

The history of the discussion of the relation of art to historiography is therefore relevant to any poetics of postmodernism, for the separation is a traditional one. To Aristotle (1982, 1451a–b), the historian could speak only of what has happened, of the particulars of the past; the poet, on the other hand, spoke of what could or might happen and so could deal more with universals. Freed of the linear succession of history writing, the poet's plot could have different unities. This was not to say that historical events and personages could not appear in tragedy: "nothing prevents some of the things that have actually happened from being of the sort that might probably or possibly happen" (1,451b). History-writing was seen to have no such conventional restraints of probability or possibility. Nevertheless, many historians since have used the techniques of fictional representation to create imaginative versions of their historical, real worlds (see Holloway 1953; G. Levine 1968; Braudy 1970; Henderson 1974). The postmodern novel has done the same, and the reverse. It is part of the postmodernist stand to confront the paradoxes of fictive/historical representation, the particular/the general, and the present/the past. And this confrontation is itself contradictory, for it refuses to recuperate or dissolve either side of the dichotomy, yet it is more than willing to exploit both.

History and fiction have always been notoriously porous genres, of course. At various times both have included in their elastic boundaries such forms as the travel tale and various versions of what we now call sociology (Veyne 1971, 30). It is not surprising that there would be overlappings of concern and even mutual influences between the two genres. In the eighteenth century the focus of this commonality of concern tended to be the relation of ethics (not factuality) to truth in narrative. (Only with the passing of the Acts of Parliament that defined libel did the notion of historical "fact" enter this debate—Davis 1983.) It is not accidental that, "From the start the writers of novels seemed determined to pretend that their work is not *made,* but that it simply exists" (Josipovici 1971, 148); in fact, it was safer, in legal and ethical terms. Defoe's works made claims to veracity and actually convinced some readers that they were factual, but most readers today (and many then) had the pleasure of a double awareness of both fictiveness and a basis in the "real"—as do readers of contemporary historiographic metafiction.

In fact Michael Coetzee's novel *Foe* addresses precisely this question of the relation of "story"- and "history"-writing to "truth" and exclusion in the

practice of Defoe. There is a direct link here to familiar assumptions of historiography: that

> every history is a history of some entity which existed for a reasonable period of time, that the historian wishes to state what is literally true of it in a sense which distinguishes the historian from a teller of fictitious or mendacious stories. (M. White 1963, 4)

Foe reveals that storytellers can certainly silence, exclude, and absent certain past events—and people—but it also suggests that historians have done the same: where are the women in the traditional histories of the eighteenth century? As we have seen, Coetzee offers the teasing fiction that Defoe did not write *Robinson Crusoe* from information from the male historical castaway Alexander Selkirk, or from other travel accounts, but from information given him by a subsequently "silenced" woman, Susan Barton, who had also been a castaway on "Cruso"'s [*sic*] island. It was Cruso who suggested that she tell her story to a writer who would add "a dash of colour" to her tale. She at first resisted because she wanted the "truth" told, and Cruso admitted that a writer's "trade is in books, not in truth" (1986, 40). But Susan saw a problem: "If I cannot come forward, as author, and swear to the truth of my tale, what will be the worth of it? I might as well have dreamed it in a snug bed in Chichester" (40).

Susan does tell Foe (he added the "De" only later, and so lost Coetzee's irony) her tale and his response is that of a novelist. Susan's reaction is irritation:

> You remarked it would have been better had Cruso rescued not only musket and powder and ball, but a carpenter's chest as well, and built himself a boat. I do not wish to be captious, but we lived on an island so buffeted by wind that there was not a tree did grow twisted and bent. (1986, 55)

In frustration, she begins her own tale: "The Female Castaway. Being a True Account of a Year Spent on a Desert Island. With Many Strange Circumstances Never Hitherto Related" (67), but discovers that the problems of writing history are not unlike those of writing fiction: "Are these enough strange circumstances to make a story of? How long before I am driven to invent new and stranger circumstances: the salvage of tools and muskets from Cruso's ship; the building of a boat . . . a landing by cannibals . . . ?" (67). Her final decision is, however, that "what we accept in life we cannot accept in history" (67)—that is, lies and fabrications.

The linking of "fictitious" to "mendacious" stories (and histories) is one with which other historiographic metafictions also seem to be obsessed: *Famous Last Words, Legs, Waterland, Shame.* In the latter, Rushdie's narrator addresses openly the possible objections to his position as insider/outsider writing about the events of Pakistan from England—and in English:

> *Outsider! Trespasser! You have no right to this subject!* . . . I know: nobody ever arrested me [as they did the friend of whom he has just written]. Nor are they ever likely to. *Poacher! Pirate! We reject your authority. We know you, with your foreign language wrapped around you like a flag: speaking about us in your forked*

> *tongue, what can you tell but lies*? I reply with more questions: is history to be considered the property of the participants solely? In what courts are such claims staked, what boundary commissions map out the territories? (1983, 28)

The eighteenth-century concern for lies and falsity becomes a postmodern concern for the multiplicity and dispersion of truth(s), truth(s) relative to the specificity of place and culture. Yet the paradox is still there: in *Shame* we learn that when Pakistan was formed, the *Indian* history had to be written out of the Pakistani past. But who did this work? History was rewritten by immigrants, in Urdu and English, the imported tongues. As the narrator puts it, he is forced—by history—to write in English "and so for ever alter what is written" (38).

There has also been another, long tradition, dating (as we have just seen) from Aristotle, that makes fiction not only separate from, but also superior to, history, which is a mode of writing limited to the representation of the contingent, and the particular. The romantic and modernist assertions of the autonomy and supremacy of art led, however, as Jane Tompkins (1980) has shown, to a marginalization of literature, one that extremes of metafiction (like American surfiction or the French New New Novel) only exacerbate. Historiographic metafiction, in deliberate contrast to what I would call such late modernist radical metafiction, attempts to demarginalize the literary through confrontation with the historical, and it does so both thematically and formally.

For example, Christa Wolf's *No Place on Earth* is about the fictionalized meeting of two historical figures, dramatist Heinrich von Kleist and poet Karoline von Günderrode: "The claim that they met: a legend that suits us. The town of Winkel, on the Rhine, we saw it ourselves." The "we" of the narrating voice, in the present, underlines the metafictive historical reconstruction on the level of form. But on the thematic level too, life and art meet, for this is the theme of the novel, as Wolf's Kleist tries to break down the walls between "literary fantasies and the actualities of the world" (1982, 12), contesting his colleagues' separation of poets from praxis: "Of all the people here, perhaps there is none more intimately bound to the real world than I am" (82). It is he, after all, who is trying to write a romantic historical work about Robert Guiscard, Duke of Normandy. The metafictive and the historiographic also meet in the intertexts of the novel, for it is through them that Wolf fleshes out the cultural and historical context of this fictive meeting. The intertexts range from Günderrode's own letters to canonic romantic works like Hölderlin's *Hyperion,* Goethe's *Torquato Tasso,* and Brentano's *Gedichte*—but, in all, the theme is the conflict between art and life. This novel reminds us, as did Roland Barthes much earlier (1967) that the nineteenth century could be said to have given birth to both the realist novel and narrative history, two genres which share a desire to select, construct, and render self-sufficient and closed a narrative world that would be representational but still separate from changing experience and historical process. Today history and fiction share a need to contest these very assumptions.

II

To the truth of art, external reality is irrelevant. Art creates its own reality, within which truth and the perfection of beauty is the infinite refinement of itself. History is very different. It is an empirical search for external truths, and for the best, most complete, and most profound external truths, in a maximal corresponding relationship with the absolute reality of the past events.

David Hackett Fischer

These words are not without their ironic tone, of course, as Fischer is describing what he sees as a standard historian's preconception about the relation of art to history. But it is not far from a description of the basic assumptions of many kinds of formalist literary criticism. For I. A. Richards, literature consisted of "pseudo-statements" (1924); for Northrop Frye (1957), art was hypothetical, not real—that is, verbal formulations which imitate real propositions; not unlike Sir Philip Sydney, structuralists argued that

> literature is not a discourse that can or must be false . . . it is a discourse that, precisely, cannot be subjected to the test of truth; it is neither true nor false, to raise this question has no meaning: this is what defines its very status as "fiction." (Todorov 1981, 18)

Historiographic metafiction suggests that truth and falsity may indeed not be the right terms in which to discuss fiction, but not for the reasons offered above. Postmodern novels like *Flaubert's Parrot, Famous Last Words,* and *A Maggot* openly assert that there are only *truths* in the plural, and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness per se, just others' truths. Fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames (see Smith 1978), frames which historiographic metafiction first establishes and then crosses, positing both the generic contracts of fiction and of history. The postmodern paradoxes here are complex. The interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both "authentic" representation and "inauthentic" copy alike, and the very meaning of artistic originality is as forcefully challenged as is the transparency of historical referentiality.

Postmodern fiction suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological. Such is the teaching of novels like Susan Daitch's *L. C.,* with its double layer of historical reconstruction, both of which are presented with metafictional self-consciousness. Parts of the journal of the fictive protagonist, Lucienne Crozier, a woman implicated in yet marginalized as a witness of the historical 1848 revolution in Paris, are edited and translated twice: once by Willa Rehnfield and once by her younger assistant after her death. The recent interest in archival women's history is given an interesting new twist here, for the two translations of the end of Lucienne's diary are so vastly different that the entire activity of translation, as well as research, is called into question. In the more traditional Willa's version, Lucienne dies of consumption in Algiers, abandoned by her revolutionary lover. In the version of her more radical assistant (a veteran of Berkeley in 1968, being

sought by the police for a terrorist bombing), Lucienne just stops writing, while awaiting arrest for revolutionary activities.

Other historiographic metafictions point to other implications of the rewriting of history. Ian Watson's *Chekhov's Journey* opens in the manner of a historical novel about Anton Chekhov's 1890 trip across Siberia to visit a convict colony. The next chapter, however, sets up a tension between this and a 1990 frame: at a Russian Artists' Retreat in the country, a film-maker, a scriptwriter, and a Chekhov look-alike actor meet to plan a film about that historical trip of 1890. The plan is to hypnotize the actor and tape his entry into Chekhov's personality and past. From these tapes, a script will emerge. However, they encounter a serious problem: the actor begins to *alter* the dates of verifiable historical events, moving the Tunguska explosion from 1888 to 1908. We are told that, from this point on, "the film project foundered further into a chaos of unhistory" (1983, 56). Suddenly a third narrative intervenes: a spaceship in the future is about to launch backward into time past. (Meanwhile, at the Retreat, fog isolates the writing team in a timeless world; telephone circuits turn back on themselves; all links to the outside are cut.) The spaceship commander realizes that he is experiencing the rewriting of history: the 1908 explosion has regressed and become that of 1888, and both prefigure (repeat?) atomic blasts of an even later date. He is caught in a time loop which renders any firm sense of history or reality impossible. (At the Retreat, new books are found in the library, rewritten versions, not of history, but of literature: *Apple Orchard, Uncle Ivan, Three Cousins, Snow Goose.* Not that history remains unscathed: Joan of Arc, Trotsky, and others get changed out of recognition, in an allegory of not only Russian revisionary history, but also all our rewritings of the past, deliberate and accidental.)

This world of provisionality and indeterminacy is made even more complex when a consultation with the *Soviet Encyclopedia* confirms the actor's altered version of the Tunguska expedition. The team decides that their film, to be entitled (like the novel) *Chekhov's Journey,* will not be the experimental one they had envisaged, but *cinéma vérité,* despite the reader's awareness that it was the hypnotic tampering with time that brought on the time warp that blasted the *Cherry Orchard* and mutated the *Sea Gull* into a *Snow Goose.* As one of the team says:

> Past events can be altered. History gets rewritten. Well, we've just found that this applies to the real world too . . . Maybe the real history of the world is changing constantly? And why? Because history is a fiction. It's a dream in the mind of humanity, forever striving . . . towards what? Towards perfection. (1983, 174)

The text provides the ironic context in which to read this last statement: the next thing mentioned is Auschwitz, and the echo of Joyce in the passage reminds us that, for him, history was not a dream, but a nightmare from which we are trying to awaken.

The problematizing of the nature of historical knowledge, in novels like this, points both to the need to separate and to the danger of separating fiction and history as narrative genres. This problematizing has also been in the foreground of much contemporary literary theory and philosophy of history, from

Hayden White to Paul Veyne. When the latter calls history "a true novel" (1971, 10), he is signaling the two genres' shared conventions: selection, organization, diegesis, anecdote, temporal pacing, and emplotment (14, 15, 22, 29, 46–8). But this is not to say that history and fiction are part of the "same order of discourse" (Lindenberger 1984, 18). They are different, though they share social, cultural, and ideological contexts, as well as formal techniques. Novels (with the exception of some extreme surfictions) incorporate social and political history to some extent, though that extent will vary (Hough 1966, 113); historiography, in turn, is as structured, coherent, and teleological as any narrative fiction. It is not only the novel but history too that is "palpably betwixt and between" (Kermode 1968, 235). Both historians and novelists *constitute* their subjects as possible objects of narrative representation, as Hayden White (1978a, 56) has argued (for history alone, however). And they do so by the very structures and language they use to present those subjects. In Jacques Ehrmann's extreme formulation: "history and literature have no existence in and of themselves. It is we who constitute them as the object of our understanding" (1981, 253). This is the teaching of texts like Doctorow's *Welcome to Hard Times,* a novel about the attempt to write history that shows historiography to be a most problematic act: do we, in writing our past, even create our future? Is the return of the Bad Man from Bodie the past re-lived, or the past re-written?

Postmodernism deliberately confuses the notion that history's problem is verification, while fiction's is veracity (Berthoff 1970, 272). Both forms of narrative are signifying systems in our culture; both are what Doctorow once called modes of "mediating the world for the purpose of introducing meaning" (1983, 24). And it is the constructed, imposed nature of that meaning (and the seeming necessity for us to make meaning) that historiographic metafiction like Coover's *The Public Burning* reveals. This novel teaches that "history itself depends on conventions of narrative, language, and ideology in order to present an account of 'what really happened'" (Mazurek 1982, 29). Both history and fiction are cultural sign systems, ideological constructions whose ideology includes their appearance of being autonomous and self-contained. It is the metafictionality of these novels that underlines Doctorow's notion that

> history is a kind of fiction in which we live and hope to survive, and fiction is a kind of speculative history . . . by which the available data for the composition is seen to be greater and more various in its sources than the historian supposes. (1983, 25)

Fredric Jameson has argued that historical representation is as surely in crisis as is the linear novel, and for much the same reasons:

> The most intelligent "solution" to such a crisis does not consist in abandoning historiography altogether, as an impossible aim and an ideological category all at once, but rather—as in the modernist aesthetic itself—in reorganizing its traditional procedures on a different level. Althusser's proposal seems the wisest in this situation: as old-fashioned narrative or "realistic" historiography becomes problematic, the historian should reformulate her vocation—not any

> longer to produce some vivid representation of history "as it really happened," but rather to produce the *concept* of history. (1984b, 180)

There is only one word I would change in this: the word "modernist" seems to me to be less apt than "postmodernist," though Jameson would never agree (see 1983; 1984a). Postmodern historiographic metafiction has done exactly what Jameson calls for here, though there is more a problematizing than just a production of a "*concept* of history" (and fiction). The two genres may be textual constructs, narratives which are both non-originary in their reliance on past intertexts and unavoidably ideologically laden, but they do not, in historiographic metafiction at least, "adopt equivalent representational procedures or constitute equivalent modes of cognition" (Foley 1986, 35). However, there are (or have been) combinations of history and fiction which do attempt such equivalence.

III

> The binary opposition between fiction and fact is no longer relevant: in any differential system, it is the assertion of the space *between* the entities that matters.
>
> Paul de Man

Perhaps. But historiographic metafiction suggests the continuing relevance of such an opposition, even if it be a problematic one. Such novels both install and then blur the line between fiction and history. This kind of generic blurring has been a feature of literature since the classical epic and the Bible (see Weinstein 1976, 263), but the simultaneous and overt assertion and crossing of boundaries is more postmodern. Umberto Eco has claimed that there are three ways to narrate the past: the romance, the swashbuckling tale, and the historical novel. He has added that it was the latter that he intended to write in *The Name of the Rose* (1983, 1984, 74–5). Historical novels, he feels, "not only identify in the past the causes of what came later, but also trace the process through which those causes began slowly to produce their effects" (76). This is why his medieval characters, like John Banville's characters in his *Doctor Copernicus,* are made to talk like Wittgenstein, for instance. I would add, however, that this device points to a fourth way of narrating the past: historiographic metafiction—and not historical fiction—with its intense self-consciousness about the way in which all this is done.

What is the difference between postmodern fiction and what we usually think of as nineteenth-century historical fiction (though its forms persist today—see Fleishman 1971)? It is difficult to generalize about this latter complex genre because, as theorists have pointed out, history plays a great number of distinctly different roles, at different levels of generality, in its various manifestations. There seems little agreement as to whether the historical past is always presented as individualized, particularized, and past (that is, different from the present) (see Shaw 1983, 26; 48; 148) or whether that past is offered as typical and therefore present, or at least as sharing values through time with the present (Lukács 1962). While acknowledging the difficulties of definition (see also Turner 1979; Shaw 1983) that the historical novel shares with most genres, I would

define historical fiction as that which is modeled on historiography to the extent that it is motivated and made operative by a notion of history as a shaping force (in the narrative and in human destiny) (see Fleishman 1971). However, it is Georg Lukács's influential and more particular definition that critics most frequently have to confront in their defining, and I am no exception.

Lukács felt that the historical novel could enact historical process by presenting a microcosm which generalizes and concentrates (1962, 39). The protagonist, therefore, should be a type, a synthesis of the general and particular, of "all the humanly and socially essential determinants." From this definition, it is clear that the protagonists of historiographic metafiction are anything but proper types: they are the ex-centrics, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history—the Coalhouse Walkers (in *Ragtime*), the Saleem Sinais (in *Midnight's Children*), the Fevvers (in *Nights at the Circus*). Even the historical personages take on different, particularized, and ultimately ex-centric status: Doctor Copernicus (in the novel of that name), Houdini (in *Ragtime*), Richard Nixon (in *The Public Burning*). Historiographic metafiction espouses a postmodern ideology of plurality and recognition of difference; "type" has little function here, except as something to be ironically undercut. There is no sense of cultural universality. The protagonist of a postmodern novel like Doctorow's *Book of Daniel* is overtly specific, individual, culturally and familially conditioned in his response to history, both public and private. The narrative form enacts the fact that Daniel is not a type of anything, no matter how much he may try to see himself as representing the New Left or his parents' cause.

Related to this notion of type is Lukács's belief that the historical novel is defined by the relative unimportance of its use of detail, which he saw as "only a means of achieving historical faithfulness, for making concretely clear the historical necessity of a concrete situation" (1962, 59). Therefore, accuracy or even truth of detail is irrelevant. Many readers of historical fiction would disagree, I suspect, as have writers of it (such as John Williams—1973, 8–11). Postmodern fiction contests this defining characteristic in two different ways. First, historiographic metafiction plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record. In novels like *Foe, Burning Water,* or *Famous Last Words,* certain known historical details are deliberately falsified in order to foreground the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history and the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error. The second difference lies in the way in which postmodern fiction actually uses detail or historical data. Historical fiction (*pace* Lukács) usually incorporates and assimilates these data in order to lend a feeling of verifiability (or an air of dense specificity and particularity) to the fictional world. Historiographic metafiction incorporates, but rarely assimilates such data. More often, the process of *attempting* to assimilate is what is foregrounded: we watch the narrators of Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* or Findley's *The Wars* trying to make sense of the historical facts they have collected. As readers, we see both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order. Historiographic metafiction acknowledges the paradox of the *reality* of the past but its *textualized accessibility* to us today.

Lukács's third major defining characteristic of the historical novel is its relegation of historical personages to secondary roles. Clearly in postmodern novels

like *Doctor Copernicus, Kepler, Legs* (about Jack Diamond), and *Antichthon* (about Giordano Bruno), this is hardly the case. In many historical novels, the real figures of the past are deployed to validate or authenticate the fictional world by their presence, as if to hide the joins between fiction and history in a formal and ontological sleight of hand. The metafictional self-reflexivity of postmodern novels prevents any such subterfuge, and poses that ontological join as a problem: how do we know the past? What do (what can) we know of it now? For example Coover does considerable violence to the known history of the Rosenbergs in *The Public Burning,* but he does so to satiric ends, in the name of social critique. I do not think that he intends to construct a willful betrayal of politically tragic events; perhaps, however, he does want to make a connection to the real world of political action through the reader—by making us aware of the need to question received versions of history. Historiographic metafiction's overt (and political) concern for its reception, for its reader, would challenge the following distinction:

> The discursive criterion that distinguishes narrative history from historical novel is that history evokes testing behavior in reception; historical discipline requires an author-reader contract that stipulates investigative equity. Historical novels are not histories, not because of a penchant for untruth, but because the author-reader contract denies the reader participation in the communal project. (Struever 1985, 264)

In fact, as we have seen in chapter 5, historiographic metafiction's emphasis on its enunciative situation—text, producer, receiver, historical, and social context—reinstalls a kind of (very problematic) communal project.

While the debates still rage about the definition of the historical novel, in the 1960s a new variant on the history/fiction confrontation came into being: the non-fictional novel. This differed from the treatment of recent factual events recounted as narrative history, as in William Manchester's *The Death of a President.* It was more a form of documentary narrative which deliberately used techniques of fiction in an overt manner and which usually made no pretense to objectivity of presentation. In the work of Hunter S. Thompson, Tom Wolfe, and Norman Mailer, the authorial structuring experience was often in the forefront as the new guarantee of "truth," as narrators individually attempted to perceive and impose pattern on what they saw about them. This metafictionality and provisionality obviously link the non-fictional novel to historiographic metafiction. But there are also significant differences.

It is probably not accidental that this form of the New Journalism, as it was called, was an American phenomenon. The Vietnam War created a real distrust of official "facts" as presented by the military and the media, and in addition, the ideology of the 1960s had licensed a revolt against homogenized forms of experience (Hellmann 1981, 8). The result was a kind of overtly personal and provisional journalism, autobiographical in impulse and performative in impact. The famous exception is Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood,* which is a modern rewriting of the realist novel—universalist in its assumptions and omniscient in its narrative technique. But in works like *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72,* and *Of a Fire on the*

Moon, there was a very "sixties" kind of direct confrontation with social reality in the present (Hollowell 1977, 10). The impact of the new mixing of fiction and fact is clear on popular, if not academic, history in the years following: in *John Brown's Journey,* Albert Fried broke the rules and showed the tentative groping movement of his becoming interested in his historical topic. The book is "marked by the feeling of an historian in the act of grappling with his subject" (Weber 1980, 144), as the subtitle underlines: *Notes and Reflections on His America and Mine.*

Perhaps, too, the non-fictional novel in its journalistic variety influenced writers like Thomas Keneally who write historical novels, often of the recent past. The self-consciousness of the author's note that prefaces *Schindler's Ark* makes clear the paradoxes of Keneally's practice:

> I have attempted to avoid all fiction, though, since fiction would debase the record, and to distinguish between reality and the myths which are likely to attach themselves to a man of Oskar's stature. Sometimes it has been necessary to attempt to reconstruct conversations of which Oskar and others have left only the briefest record. (1982, 9–10)

At the beginning of the novel, Keneally points to his reconstructions (which he refuses to see as fictionalizations) by self-reflexive references to the reader ("In observing this small winter scene, we are on safe ground." —13) or by conditional verb forms. Nevertheless, there is a progression from initial statements of possibility and probability ("it is possible that . . ." and "[they] now probably paid attention") to a generalized use of the (historical) past tense and a single authoritative voice, as the story continues. This is not historiographic metafiction, however much it may seem so in its early pages. Nor is it quite (or not consistently) an example of the New Journalism, despite its commitment to the "authority of fact" (Weber 1980, 36).

The non-fictional novel of the 1960s and 1970s did not just record the contemporary hysteria of history, as Robert Scholes has claimed (1968, 37). It did not just try to embrace "the fictional element inevitable in any reporting" and then try to imagine its "way toward the truth" (37). What it did was seriously question who determined and created that truth, and it was this particular aspect of it that perhaps enabled historiographic metafiction's more paradoxical questioning. A number of critics have seen parallels between the two forms, but seem to disagree completely on the form that parallel might take. For one, both stress the overt, totalizing power of the imagination of the writers to create unities (Hellmann 1981, 16); yet, for another, both refuse to neutralize contingency by reducing it to unified meaning (Zavarzadeh 1976, 41). I would agree with the former as a designation of the non-fictional novel, though not of all metafiction; and the latter certainly defines a lot of contemporary self-reflexive writing more accurately than it does the New Journalism. Historiographic metafiction, of course, paradoxically fits both definitions: it installs totalizing order, only to contest it, by its radical provisionality, intertextuality, and, often, fragmentation.

In many ways, the non-fiction novel is another late modernist creation (see Smart 1985, 3), in the sense that both its self-consciousness about its writ-

ing process and its stress on subjectivity (or psychological realism) recall Woolf's and Joyce's experiments with limited, depth vision in narrative, though in the New Journalism, it is specifically the author whose historical presence as participant authorizes subjective response. Postmodern novels like Rudy Wiebe's *The Scorched-Wood People* parody this stance, however: Pierre Falcon, the narrating participant in the historical action, was real, but is still fictionalized in the novel: he is made to tell the tale of the historical Louis Riel from a point of time after his own death, with all the insights of retrospection and access to information he could not possibly have had as participant.

There are non-fictional novels, however, which come very close to historiographic metafiction in their form and content. Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* is subtitled *History as a Novel, the Novel as History.* In each of the two parts of the book there is a moment in which the narrator addresses the reader on the conventions and devices used by novelists (1968, 152) and historians (245). His final decision seems to be that historiography ultimately fails experience and "the instincts of the novelist" have to take over (284). This self-reflexivity does not weaken, but on the contrary, strengthens and points to the direct level of historical engagement and reference of the text (cf. Bradbury 1983, 159). Like many postmodern novels, this provisionality and uncertainty (and the willful and overt constructing of meaning too) do not "cast doubt upon their seriousness" (Butler 1980, 131), but rather define the new postmodern seriousness that acknowledges the limits and powers of "reporting" or writing of the past, recent or remote.

IV

History is three-dimensional. It partakes of the nature of science, art, and philosophy.

Louis Gottschalk

Postmodern novels raise a number of specific issues regarding the interaction of historiography and fiction that deserve more detailed study: issues surrounding the nature of identity and subjectivity; the question of reference and representation; the intertextual nature of the past; and the ideological implications of writing about history. Although these will subsequently be treated in separate chapters, a brief overview at this point will show where these issues fit into the poetics of postmodernism.

First of all, historiographic metafictions appear to privilege two modes of narration, both of which problematize the entire notion of subjectivity: multiple points of view (as in Thomas's *The White Hotel*) or an overtly controlling narrator (as in Swift's *Waterland*). In neither, however, do we find a subject confident of his/her ability to know the past with any certainty. This is not a transcending of history, but a problematized inscribing of subjectivity into history. In a novel like *Midnight's Children,* nothing, not even the self's physical body, survives the instability caused by the rethinking of the past in non-developmental, non-continuous terms. To use the (appropriate) language of Michel Foucault, Saleem Sinai's body is exposed as "totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body" (1977, 148). As we

shall see in chapter 10, postmodernism establishes, differentiates, and then disperses stable narrative voices (and bodies) that use memory to try to make sense of the past. It both installs and then subverts traditional concepts of subjectivity; it both asserts and is capable of shattering "the unity of man's being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to the events of the past" (Foucault 1977, 153). The protagonist's psychic disintegration in *Waterland* reflects such a shattering, but his strong narrative voice asserts that same selfhood, in a typically postmodern and paradoxical way. So too do the voices of those unreliable narrators of Burgess's *Earthly Powers* and Williams's *Star Turn,* the former "uncommitted to verifiable fact" (1980, 490) and the latter a self-confessed liar.

As we shall see in the next chapter, one of the postmodern ways of literally incorporating the textualized past into the text of the present is that of parody. In John Fowles's *A Maggot,* the parodic intertexts are both literary and historical. Interspersed throughout the book are pages from the 1736 *Gentleman's Magazine,* but there are many references to eighteenth-century drama as well, allusions that are formally motivated by the presence of actors in the plot. But it is to the fiction of the period that Fowles refers most often: its pornography, its prurient puritanism (as in Richardson's novels), but most of all, its mixing of fact and fiction, as in the writing of Defoe, whose "underlying approach and purpose" the narrator has consciously borrowed (1985, 449).

Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context. It is not a modernist desire to order the present through the past or to make the present look spare in contrast to the richness of the past (see Antin 1972, 106–14). It is not an attempt to void or avoid history. Instead it directly confronts the past of literature—and of historiography, for it too derives from other texts (documents). It uses and abuses those intertextual echoes, inscribing their powerful allusions and then subverting that power through irony. In all, there is little of the modernist sense of a unique, symbolic, visionary "work of art"; there are only texts, already written ones. Walter Hill's film *Crossroads* uses the biography and music of Robert Johnson to foreground the fictional Willie Brown and Lightening Boy, who pick up the Faustian challenge from the devil of his song, "Crossroads' Blues."

To what, though, does the very language of historiographic metafiction refer? To a world of history or one of fiction? It is commonly accepted that there is a radical disjunction between the basic assumptions underlying these two notions of reference. History's referents are presumed to be real; fiction's are not. But, as chapter 9 will investigate more fully, what postmodern novels teach is that, in both cases, they actually refer at the first level to other texts: we know the past (which really did exist) only through its textualized remains. Historiographic metafiction problematizes the activity of reference by refusing either to bracket the referent (as surfiction might) or to revel in it (as nonfictional novels might). This is not an emptying of the meaning of language, as Gerald Graff seems to think (1973, 397). The text still communicates—in fact, it does so very didactically. There is not so much "a loss of belief in a significant external reality" (403) as there is a loss of faith in our ability to

(unproblematically) *know* that reality, and therefore to be able to represent it in language. Fiction and historiography are not different in this regard.

Postmodern fiction also poses new questions about reference. The issue is no longer "to what empirically real object in the past does the language of history refer?"; it is more "to which discursive context could this language belong? To which prior textualizations must we refer?" This is true in the visual arts as well, where the issue of reference is perhaps clearer. Sherrie Levine has framed Andreas Feininger's photographs of real subjects and has called *her* work "Photographs by Andreas Feininger." In other words, she frames the existing discourse to create a double remove from the real. In dance, Merce Cunningham's influence has led to postmodern choreography that not only uses visual or musical discourses, but also looks to concepts that would make movement freer of direct reference, in either a sculptural or expressive sense (Kirby 1975, 3–4).

Postmodern art is more complex and more problematic than extreme late modernist auto-representation might suggest, with its view that there is no presence, no external truth which verifies or unifies, that there is only self-reference (Smith 1978, 8–9). Historiographic metafiction self-consciously suggests this, but then uses it to signal the discursive nature of all reference—both literary and historiographical. The referent is always already inscribed in the discourses of our culture. This is no cause for despair; it is the text's major link with the "world," one that acknowledges its identity as construct, rather than as simulacrum of some "real" outside. Once again, this does not deny that the past "real" existed; it only conditions our mode of knowledge of that past. We can know it only through its traces, its relics. The question of reference depends on what John Searle (1975, 330) calls a shared "pretense" and what Stanley Fish calls being party to a set of "discourse agreements which are in effect decisions as to what can be stipulated as a fact" (1980, 242). In other words, a "fact" is discourse-defined; an "event" is not.

Postmodern art is not so much ambiguous as it is doubled and contradictory. There is a rethinking of the modernist tendency to move away from representation (Harkness 1982, 9) by both installing it materially and subverting it. In the visual arts, as in literature, there has been a rethinking of the sign/referent relation in the face of the realization of the limits of self-reflexivity's separation from social practice (Menna 1984, 10). Historiographic metafiction shows fiction to be historically conditioned and history to be discursively structured, and in the process manages to broaden the debate about the ideological implications of the Foucaldian conjunction of power and knowledge—for readers and for history itself as a discipline. As the narrator of Rushdie's *Shame* puts it:

> History is natural selection. Mutant versions of the past struggle for dominance; new species of fact arise, and old, saurian truths go to the wall, blindfolded and smoking last cigarettes. Only the mutations of the strong survive. The weak, the anonymous, the defeated leave few marks. . . . History loves only those who dominate her: it is a relationship of mutual enslavement. (1983, 124)

The question of *whose* history survives is one that obsesses postmodern novels like Timothy Findley's *Famous Last Words.* In problematizing almost every-

thing the historical novel once took for granted, historiographic metafiction destabilizes received notions of both history and fiction. To illustrate this change, let me take Barbara Foley's concise description of the paradigm of the nineteenth-century historical novel and insert in square brackets the postmodern changes:

> Characters [never] constitute a microcosmic portrayal of representative social types; they experience complications and conflicts that embody important tendencies [not] in historical development [whatever that might mean, but in narrative plotting, often traceable to other intertexts]; one or more world-historical figures enters the fictive world, lending an aura of extratextual validation to the text's generalizations and judgments [which are promptly undercut and questioned by the revealing of the true intertextual, rather than extratextual, identity of the sources of that validation]; the conclusion [never] reaffirms [but contests] the legitimacy of a norm that transforms social and political conflict into moral debate. (1986, 160)

The premise of postmodern fiction is the same as that articulated by Hayden White regarding history: "every representation of the past has specifiable ideological implications" (1978b, 69). But the ideology of postmodernism is paradoxical, for it depends upon and draws its power from that which it contests. It is not truly radical; nor is it truly oppositional. But this does not mean it has no critical clout, as we shall see in chapters 11 and 12. The Epiloguist of *A Maggot* may claim that what we have read is indeed "a maggot, not an attempt, either in fact or in language, to reproduce known history" (Fowles 1985, 449), but that does not stop him from extended ideological analyses of eighteenth-century social, sexual, and religious history. Thomas Pynchon's obsession with plots—narrative and conspiratorial—is an ideological one: his characters discover (or make) their own histories in an attempt to prevent themselves from being the passive victims of the commercial or political plots of others (Krafft 1984, 284). Similarly contemporary philosophers of history like Michel de Certeau have reminded historiographers that no research of the past is free of socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions (1975, 65). Novels like *The Public Burning* or *Ragtime* do not trivialize the historical and the factual in their "game-playing" (Robertson 1984), but rather politicize them through their metafictional rethinking of the epistemological and ontological relations between history and fiction. Both are acknowledged as part of larger social and cultural discourses which various kinds of formalist literary criticism have relegated to the extrinsic and irrelevant. This said, it is also true that it is part of the postmodern ideology not to ignore cultural bias and interpretative conventions and to question authority—even its own.

All of these issues—subjectivity, intertextuality, reference, ideology—underlie the problematized relations between history and fiction in postmodernism. But many theorists today have pointed to narrative as the one concern that envelops all of these, for the process of narrativization has come to be seen as a central form of human comprehension, of imposition of meaning and formal coherence on the chaos of events (H. White 1981, 795; Jameson

1981, 13; Mink 1978, 132). Narrative is what translates knowing into telling (H. White 1980, 5), and it is precisely this translation that obsesses postmodern fiction. The conventions of narrative in both historiography and novels, then, are not constraints, but enabling conditions of possibility of sense-making (Martin 1986). Their disruption or challenging is bound to upset such basic structuring notions as causality and logic—as happens with Oskar's drumming in *The Tin Drum:* narrative conventions are both installed and subverted. The refusal to integrate fragments (in novels like *The White Hotel*) is a refusal of the closure and telos which narrative usually demands (see Kermode 1966, 1967). In postmodern poetry too, as Marjorie Perloff has argued, narrative is used in works like Ashbery's "They Dream Only of America" or Dorn's *Slinger,* but used in order to question "the very nature of the *order* that a systematic plot structure implies" (1985, 158).

The issue of narrativity encompasses many others that point to the postmodern view that we can only know "reality" as it is produced and sustained by cultural representations of it (Owens 1982, 21). In historiographic metafictions, these are often not simple verbal representations, for *ekphrases* (or verbal representations of visual representations) often have central representational functions. For example in Carpentier's *Explosion in a Cathedral,* Goya's "Desastres de la guerra" series provides the works of visual art that actually are the sources of the novel's descriptions of revolutionary war. The seventh of that series, plus the "Dos de Mayo" and "Tres de Mayo," are particularly important, for their glorious associations are left aside by Carpentier, as an ironic signal of his own point of view. Of course, literary intertexts function in the narrative in a similar way. The details of Estaban and Sofía's house in Madrid come, in fact, from Torres Villaroel's *Vida,* a book which Estaban had read earlier in the novel (see Saad 1983, 120–2; McCallum 1985).

Historiographic metafictions, like both historical fiction and narrative history, cannot avoid dealing with the problem of the status of their "facts" and of the nature of their evidence, their documents. And, obviously, the related issue is that of how those documentary sources are deployed: can they be objectively, neutrally related? Or does interpretation inevitably enter with narrativization? The epistemological question of how we know the past joins the ontological one of the status of the traces of that past. Needless to say, the postmodern raising of these questions offers few answers, but this provisionality does not result in some sort of historical relativism or presentism. It rejects projecting present beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts, in strong terms, the specificity and particularity of the individual past event. Nevertheless, it also realizes that we are epistemologically limited in our ability to know that past, since we are both spectators of and actors in the historical process. Historiographic metafiction suggests a distinction between "events" and "facts" that is one shared by many historians. Events, as I have been suggesting, are configured into facts by being related to "conceptual matrices within which they have to be imbedded if they are to count as facts" (Munz 1977, 15). Historiography and fiction, as we saw earlier, *constitute* their objects of attention; in other words, they decide which events will become facts. The

postmodern problematization points to our unavoidable difficulties with the concreteness of events (in the archive, we can find only their textual traces to make into facts) and their accessibility. (Do we have a full trace or a partial one? What has been absented, discarded as non-fact material?) Dominick La-Capra has argued that all documents or artifacts used by historians are not neutral evidence for reconstructing phenomena which are assumed to have some independent existence outside them. All documents process information and the very way in which they do so is itself a historical fact that limits the documentary conception of historical knowledge (1985, 45). This is the kind of insight that has led to a semiotics of history, for documents become signs of events which the historian transmutes into facts (B. Williams 1985, 40). They are also, of course, signs within already semiotically constructed contexts, themselves dependent upon institutions (if they are official records) or individuals (if they are eye-witness accounts). As in historiographic metafiction, the lesson here is that the past once existed, but that our historical knowledge of it is semiotically transmitted.

I do not mean to suggest that this is a radical, new insight. In 1910 Carl Becker wrote that "the facts of history do not exist for any historian until he creates them" (525), that representations of the past are selected to signify whatever the historian intends. It is this very difference between events (which have no meaning in themselves) and facts (which are given meaning) that postmodernism obsessively foregrounds. Even documents are selected as a function of a certain problem or point of view (Ricoeur 1984, 108). Historiographic metafiction often points to this fact by using the paratextual conventions of historiography (especially footnotes) to both inscribe and undermine the authority and objectivity of historical sources and explanations. Unlike the documentary novel as defined by Barbara Foley, what I have been calling postmodern fiction does not "aspire to tell the truth" (Foley 1986, 26) as much as to question *whose* truth gets told. It does not so much associate "this truth with claims to empirical validation" as contest the ground of any claim to such validation. How can a historian (or a novelist) check any historical account against past empirical reality in order to test its validity? Facts are not given but are constructed by the kinds of questions we ask of events (H. White 1978b, 43). In the words of *Waterland's* history teacher, the past is a "thing which cannot be eradicated, which accumulates and impinges" (Swift 1983, 109). What postmodern discourses—fictive and historiographic—ask is: how do we know and come to terms with such a complex "thing"?

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Part Fourteen

The Colonial and Postcolonial Novel

Dialectics is an experimental and heuristic method, a technique of discovery that proceeds by dividing wholes into parts and by disclosing wholes within parts. In historical study, dialectical method begins with the division between the diachronic and the synchronic dimensions of historical experience. Applied to the diachronic axis, dialectics is a method of periodization whose fundamental division is that between "Tradition" and "Modernity." In the preceding pages, the most common subdivisions have been familiar chronological categories like "Antiquity," "Medieval," "Renaissance," "Early Modern"; "Realism," "Modernism," "Postmodernism" (part 14 will add "Colonial," "Postcolonial," and "Neotraditional"); as well as "Orality," "Literacy," and "Print." Applied to the synchronic axis, dialectics discloses a fundamental division between the "material" and the "cultural" (or between "infrastructure" and "superstructure"). Within the local field of novel theory, synchronic dialectics has yielded a number of distinct but related categorial sets: "Mode" and "Genre"; "Lyric," "Drama," and "Narrative"; "Myth," "Epic," "Romance," "Novel," "Biography-Autobiography"; "epistolary novel," "domestic novel," "*Bildungsroman,*" "gothic novel," "historical novel," "new novel"; "English novel," "French novel," "Spanish novel," "North American novel" (part 14 will add "African American novel," "Latin American novel," "African novel," and "Indian novel"); as well as (again) "Orality," "Literacy," and "Print." The criteria by which these diachronic and synchronic categories have been derived are those not of an a priori taxonomic logic but of hermeneutic and empirical usage. The integrity or continuity, the partibility or discontinuity of categorial wholes is not a given but a variable product of historical practice. The historical theory of the novel takes place in the ongoing adjudication of wholes and parts within both the diachronic and the synchronic dimensions of historical experience, as well as at the multiple intersections of the diachronic and synchronic axes themselves.

Like the problems of degenerating myth and North American romance,[1] the problem of the colonial and postcolonial novel confronts the central question of the coherence of narrative form by shifting the question of formal coherence from the more accustomed plane of historical diachrony to that of historical synchrony. Within this framework, the "tradition" of the hinterlands

1. See above, ch. 7, Lévi-Strauss, "How Myths Die"; ch. 29, Bell.

is understood to be contemporaneous with the "modernity" of the metropolitan center, and "modernization" is conceived as a means of getting not from "then" to "now" but from "there" to "here." Not that temporal difference now ceases to be an issue. Rather, the foregrounding of spatial difference—between "first world" and "third world," between "core" and "periphery"—throws into relief the existence of alternative periodizing conventions—not only "traditional-modern-postmodern," but also "traditional-colonial-postcolonial" —which are roughly parallel but not for that reason homologous.

Among other things, the timing with which the several modes of cultural production (orality, literacy, print) enter into first-world experience and thereby help shape its chronology is far more consecutive and incremental than their overlapping and foreshortened timing in the third world, where first-world incursion itself is one crucial agent of rapid cultural change.[2] At the postcolonial moment, the synchronic correspondence between infrastructure and superstructure is therefore bound to be a good deal less uniform even than that experienced under first-world conditions, and the deceptively similar diachronies that give us, respectively, the postcolonial and the postmodern moment are also likely to exhibit a markedly uneven development.

Part 14 collects essays that address a range of regional and national cultures (Latin American, African, Indian) as different versions of this basic phenomenon without seeking to reduce their differences to equivalence.[3] The first and third essays differ from the second in treating—whether inclusively, as in Sommer and Yudice, or selectively, as in Sangari—a broad corpus of contemporary third-world fiction rather than concentrating on those novels that, more strictly "colonial and postcolonial," were written in European languages and addressed, at least in part, to a first-world audience. These two essays therefore provide a fuller account of what happens to the novel when it is transported beyond Europe—but for that very reason a less focused account of the non-European novel as a self-conscious import.

In their broad survey of the field, Doris Sommer and George Yudice do not so much theorize the relations between the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of generic coherence as apply them methodologically, placing the contemporary Latin American novel within the chronology of "its own" development in the same movement by which they situate it in relation to Western cultural and material influence. In the course of this survey, ideas familiar to us from the theory of the Western novel are refracted and redoubled through the lens of self-conscious relation to Western example. Issues of competitive innovation conjoin the four basic stages in the chronology of the Latin American novel—national romance, modernism, Boom, and post-Boom—that gives the survey its basic diachronic structure. "The literary Boom of the 1960s, then, is a break with the past in a tradition of similar breaks." But these issues also color each stage in its synchronic relations both to Western culture

2. This isn't to deny, however, the synchronic, palimpsestic relation between orality, literacy, and print once they've become available to first-world culture.

3. For an essay that raises many of these issues in the "postcolonial" context of the African-American novel, see Toni Morrison, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," in *Black Women Writers (1950–1980),* ed. Mari Evans (New York: Anchor, 1984), 339–45.

and economy and to domestic political authority. "Like its political history, Latin America's paradoxical literary history is a series of efforts to catch up with the centers of power in order to achieve a real independence from them." For Sommer and Yudice, the Boom period only concentrates questions of cultural and material change that are continuous throughout the entire period they survey.

As with nineteenth-century North American "romance," the question of the novelty of the novel in Latin America has been tightly bound up with questions of the autonomy and authority of the region and the nation. In the wake of Independence, writers "strove to establish a new culture by, paradoxically, drawing on European progress (or civilization) against a native barbarism." A century later, Boom novelists found themselves demystifying nativism and national identity to the end of their reauthentication. As much as the Boom's critique of "traditional authorial control . . . owes to the lessons of European high modernism, it owes to the sense of disappointment in the political and economic authors of Latin America." Capitalist modernization based on Western models liberated Boom writers to combine this sort of literary modernization with an ironic detachment from capitalist culture at large.

In a related fashion, the critique of technological society sits uneasily with the deployment of "advanced" narrative technique. Carlos Fuentes "not only revels in the margins to which technology has relegated his writing, but he also adopts the technocrat's skill at manipulating the unstable functions of modern society." Yet despite these echoes of Western novel theory, "the multi-layered self-reflexivity" of Boom writing has its own special character. The correlation between cultural and material production that has proved tempting in theorizing the material significance of Western postmodernism cannot capture the singularity and variety of the Latin American experience of "transculturation." "Latin American literature, then, does not fit comfortably into the category of postmodernism."

Transporting the argument to Africa, Kwame Anthony Appiah seems at first more confident than Sommer and Yudice about disclosing the juncture between the postcolonial and the postmodern. This owes, at least in part, to the confidence with which he affirms the idea of a "modern/postmodern dichotomy." Modernism is a "self-privileging project" that claims an "exclusivity of insight"; in "reject[ing]," "transcending," and "distancing" itself from that claim, postmodernism "clear[s] a space" between itself and "the ancestors." The postcolonial makes a similar "space-clearing gesture" with respect to its own "earlier legitimating narrative," the colonial project; hence the juncture. But as we've seen, the history of modernity is littered with space-clearing gestures (indeed, space-clearing is more often than not also an exclusionary and self-privileging project): by this logic, postmodernism is as conjunct with modernism as it is with the postcolonial. Appiah sidesteps this recognition through an oddly partial reading of modernism.[4] Despite this, however, the

4. Taking Max Weber's view of "modernity" as an (unlikely) gloss on "modernism," Appiah reads Weber's account of the universal importance of Western principles of rationality and methods of rationalization as an ethnocentric idealization of Reason that obscures the

major burden of the essay is to complicate, rather than simply to confirm, the juncture of the postmodern and the postcolonial.

This is at least in part because the conventional chronologies of first-world ("traditional-modern-postmodern") and third-world ("traditional-colonial-postcolonial") culture are parallel but not homologous. Appiah tacitly acknowledges this when, subdividing the last, postcolonial period of the African novel into two stages, he is obliged to raid the middle period of the first-world chronology for the category "realism." By this means, the distinction between the first and the second stage of the postcolonial novel can be expressed as one between the realist-nationalist and the postrealist-postnationalist novel. But the result is to concentrate, into a brief third-world period, developments which evolved over a much longer course of time in the first-world chronology.[5] This does not challenge the fundamental coherence of the novel genre: Appiah is nowhere interested in questioning the generic novelness of these African narratives. But it does draw attention to those palimpsestic qualities of cultural dissonance and overlay that are recognizably novelistic but peculiar, perhaps, to novels written within a culture in which the genre itself is not indigenous. In fact, the postcolonial novel might in these terms be seen not as a questionable, but as a quintessential, example of its kind, precisely because its special status as a generic alien or immigrant reinforces its formal "homelessness."[6]

But the problem of "realism"'s chronology is a function not only of synchronic complications introduced by the phenomenon of the third-world

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more likely motor of modernity, commodification and the money economy. But Weber's highly nuanced argument, so far from mistaking commodification for rationality, instead names commodification as the "fateful" consummation of modern rationalization: "[C]apitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever *renewed* profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise. . . . [A] capitalistic economic action [is] one which rests on the expectation of profit by the utilization of opportunities for exchange. . . . Where capitalistic acquisition is rationally pursued, the corresponding action is adjusted to calculations in terms of capital." *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner's, 1958), author's introduction, 17–18. In fact, rational calculation is nothing other than "the spirit of capitalism," and the argument of Weber's most famous book is that the modern secularization—the disenchantment—of the world involves not the disappearance but the redirection of religious belief toward the "worldly asceticism" of capitalism. Appiah takes from this argument only its claims to "universal" relevance, which he associates with the modernist ambition to value primitive art as its normative Other by applying to it "putatively *universal* aesthetic criteria"—a process to which postmodernism's cultural relativism, it turns out, is itself not immune. The distinctions Appiah labors to enforce too often collapse in this fashion under moderate pressure: it also turns out that postmodernism is in the habit of borrowing the techniques of modernism.

5. There is some ambiguity here. Appiah's discussion does give us the option of reading the first, realist stage as belonging to a period preceding that of the postcolonial. However, against this reading stands his firmly postcolonial contextualization of that stage, whose exemplary novels clearly fulfill the basic requirement of the postcolonial as being "concerned with transcending, with going beyond, coloniality."

6. In this respect, compare Appiah's account of the highly self-conscious "circulation of cultures" at work in the postcolonial novel with Sommer and Yudice's notion of "transculturation," and both with Bakhtin on the novelizing consequences of the coming into consciousness of polyglossia and heteroglossia (above, pt. 6).

novel, but also of diachronic eccentricities internal to the theory of the first-world novel. Appiah's "realism" is a familiar straw man: axiomatically, "[r]ealism naturalizes." However, those who have read Appiah's exemplary text, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart,* will know that it can be deemed "realist" only in the sense of that term authorized by the grand theorists of the novel, since its formal techniques (heteroglossic narration, oral-typographical mixtures, intertextual reflexivity) are closely comparable to those of the novel Appiah takes as paradigmatically "postrealist," Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence.* By the same token, Ouologuem's "postrealist" questioning of "*the efficacy* of the call to the Ancestors as well as the Ancestors themselves" also lies at the heart of Achebe's "realism."

In fact Appiah's account of Achebe's form is minimal, perhaps because he's more interested in what he takes to be realism's implicit content. What realism "sought to naturalize was . . . nationalism" (too easily conjoined here with "nativism"). Accordingly, the postrealist novel "seeks to delegitimate not only the form of realism but the content of nationalism." This argument interestingly evokes not only the principle of a form-content dialectic that's a hallmark of the theory of novelistic realism, but also the way this dialectic has been specified, in the theory of North American romance, as one between romance and nationality.[7] Appiah seems to suggest here that the emphasis he places on novelistic content is justified by an important difference between the postcolonial and the postmodern: if the latter is an aesthetics, the former is a politics "in the most literal sense of the term."[8] In association with the contrast between the postmodern's cultural relativism and the postcolonial's ethical universalism, this amounts to Appiah's most explicit, and most suggestive, effort to complicate the juncture of the postmodern and the postcolonial. Yet it's hard to think what can be meant by labeling "nationalist" the sagaciously far-sighted and ostentatiously nonnationalist politics of *Things Fall Apart.*

It may be, then, that the theory of the postcolonial novel does not so much challenge as exaggerate the coherence of the genre. That is, it tempts critics to impose upon the history of the postcolonial novel, despite its concentrated and foreshortened chronology, a schematic temporal typology (first realism-nationalism, then postrealism-postnationalism) that approximates what they believe they know about the history of the first-world novel. It therefore may be useful to turn our attention away from Appiah's realist-postrealist chronology and toward his other category of postcolonial art.

In propounding the idea of the "neotraditional" artwork as one unavailable through novel theory, Appiah may be acknowledging the pitfalls I've just tried to formulate. Unlike the realist-postrealist chronology, the unitary category of the neotraditional derives its primary sense of diachronic difference from its own, third-world, chronology while at the same time acknowledging

7. See Bell, above, ch. 29. See also Anderson's more general correlation of the novel and nationality, above, ch. 16.

8. Is there a useful connection to be made between Appiah's opposition "postcolonial politics versus postmodern aesthetics" and Benjamin's opposition "the communist politicizing of art versus the fascist aestheticizing of politics" ("Work of Art," above, ch. 31)?

its crucial relation to first-world cultural forms.[9] Neotraditional art—"*traditional* because it uses actual or supposed precolonial techniques but *neo*-. . . because it has elements that are recognizably colonial or postcolonial in reference—has been made for Western tourists and other collectors." In fact, what Appiah says of the neotraditional sculpture *Man with a Bicycle* may be paraphrased in application to Achebe's novel: *Things Fall Apart* "is produced by someone who does not care that the [novel] is the white man's invention: it is not there to be Other to the [Igbo] Self; . . . it is there because [novelists] are now as African as [machines]."

In politico-material terms, the synchronic relationship between metropolitan core and (post)colonial periphery, between modernity and tradition-undergoing-modernization, is one of unequal determinacy. This inequality may be analogized to the inequality that characterizes the theoretical structure of historical synchrony itself: first-world core is to third-world periphery as material infrastructure is to cultural superstructure. One end of postcolonial studies is to make sense of the comparatively recent entry of the third world into (first-world) history in terms that are nonetheless not simply those of the first world or of its history. In Kumkum Sangari's argument, this end is served by the demonstration that the cultural synchrony of the postmodern and the postcolonial is not to be confused with the historical synchrony of infrastructure and superstructure: that it is neither a homology nor an unequal determinacy. The idea of "cultural imperialism" is in this sense insidious.

For Sangari, the difference between the postcolonial and the postmodern may be encapsulated within the difference between what she calls the "nonmimetic" and the "antimimetic," a differentiation that recalls ours between the "distinction" between, and the "separation-conflation" of, categories. Postcolonial "marvelous [or magic] realism" exemplifies the nonmimetic mode of cognition. As practiced by Gabriel García Márquez, the technique has a "seamless" quality because it seems to proceed independently of the antithetical oppositions—between the real and the marvelous, factuality and invention, rationalism and mysticism—on which the antimimetic conflations of postmodernism depend.

To be sure, the nonmimetic mode is not the mode of tradition as such. But if in the presence of marvelous realism we (inevitably) experience not only the conflation but also the separation of categories, we do not experience this as the result of a prolonged historical process of separation out, as we do what Sangari calls the "cultural synchronicity" of first-world postmodernism: "[T]he synchronic time of the modern and of the postmodern in the West is an *end* product of the now discredited linear time of modernity and progress."[10] Third-world postcolonialism, by contrast, entails a "cultural simultaneity," not a historical end product but an ongoing "historical sedimentation that results from the physical coexistence over time of different ethnic groups," from "the coexistence of primitive agriculture with advanced technology and export

9. The category has also arisen in direct application to the temporality of first-world forms: on modernism and postmodernism as "neotraditionalisms" see above, headnotes to pts. 11, 12.

10. Compare the idea of a modernist-structuralist "spatial form," above, ch. 36.

economies," and from the determinacy of "the 'linear' history of the West, which both nests inside and shapes Latin American history, often by erasure."[11] Finally, the sociopolitical embeddedness of the postcolonial nonmimetic ensures that its epistemological inquiry retains a sociopolitical resonance that is at least evocative of that mode of categorial distinction which obtains under tradition: "The difficulty of fixing meaning itself is located as a part of social transactions and of ideology." "What is problematized is not meaning 'itself,' but the recovery of meaning in specific contexts." The postmodern antimimetic, however, subjects epistemology to an unsurpassably separating "depoliticization": "since postmodernism both privileges the present and valorizes indeterminacy as a cognitive mode, it also deflates social contradiction into forms of ambiguity or deferral."

How does Sangari conceive the relation between the postcolonial nonmimetic mode and tradition itself? Is it useful to see the former as a species of "neotraditionalism"? In Márquez, "the collective, digressive quality of an oral narrative" betrays a "heteroglossia" that distinguishes it from the culture of "sealed tribal formations,"[12] and "the absence of a single linear time need not be read as the absence of a historical consciousness, but rather as the operation of a different kind of historical consciousness." The nonmimetic mode of Salman Rushdie, more strictly postcolonial than that of Márquez in being "riven by the strain of double coding for different audiences," is also for Sangari more difficult to disentangle from postmodern antimimesis. Rushdie's recourse to traditional epic form is colored by the neotraditionalist ambition of modernism itself, which had "incorporated" colonial instability "either as 'primitive' image/metaphor or as mobile nonlinear structure," then passed it on to third-world writers despite its being "based partly on a random appropriation and remodeling of the 'liberating' and energizing possibilities of their own indigenous 'traditions.'" "The modernist problems of knowing and representation continue to inform postmodernism," which may turn out to be only "another internalization of the international role of the West." For Sangari, disengaging the postcolonial from the postmodern with which it is synchronous goes hand in hand with demonstrating the diachronic continuity of the postmodern with the modernist. It may be true that in its "weak" form, the postcolonial novel will seem to bleed into the postmodern through this modernist mediation. In its "strong" form, however, the technical armory which the postcolonial novel seems to share with the postmodern novel actually works against the latter's "universaliz[ing]" and "imperious" sociopolitics.

Just as the terminology of the postcolonial "neotraditional" may be preferable to Appiah's "realist-postrealist" chronology, so it may improve upon Sangari's "nonmimetic" mode; and for related reasons. The "non-/anti-" formulation itself elegantly captures the logic of the negated and excluded middle which defines the problem of apparent homology that she would resolve. But

11. With this "nesting" figure compare Ortega y Gasset's spatial metaphors for novelistic distance: see above, pt. 5.

12. Sangari works here with a Bakhtinian conception of tradition that may be less evidently compatible with a notion of tacit categorial distinction than is the one developed in these pages.

by taking at face value the modernist-postmodernist-poststructuralist account of mimesis (or "realism"), Sangari forfeits the recognition that the realist novel may provide an even more likely foil than these modes for the postcolonial novel. The modernist and postmodernist foray into the third world for its "indigenous traditions" betrays in the first world, by the end of the imperial nineteenth century, the waning usability of its own past, its own traditions. The more indigenous neotraditionalism of novelistic practice in the preceding centuries of modernity is broadly evident, perhaps, in the relatively externalized nature of its signature reflexive detachment.

Of course, the twentieth-century novel doesn't foresake this signature stance; but it internalizes the means of its expression to such a degree that the reference to our own historicocultural matrix is obscured by epistemological and psychological refinement, and the memory of distinction is drowned out by the self-canceling clamor of conflation against separation. Certainly Sangari's account of the postcolonial novel, even as it shrugs off the postmodern novel, often evokes in that very movement the theory of the novel as such: narrative as a "self-conscious textuality" that "does not ask to be read as an effect either of the autonomy of language or text or even as a gesture toward the auto-referentiality of art," but rather "is grounded in an overplus of meaning, a barely controlled semantic richness"; "[t]he difficulty of distinguishing between fact and fiction" conceived as "a *political* difficulty that bears upon the ethical difficulty of functioning as 'real' human beings"; an "interactive narration" that "replicates the way in which people construct and are mutually constructed by their social relations"; the individuality of characters conceived as "a truly connective definition—that which connects the subject to a collectivity"; a representation of narrative and figural voices, of oral, epistolary, and typographical techniques, that weaves precisely and acutely realized sociopolitical strands into the polysemantic diversity of a hybrid culture.

In the end, even "marvelous realism" may seem to approach the status of tautology (compare "the new novel"). Sangari describes marvelous realism as a technique that "tackles the problem of truth at a level that reinvents a more acute and comprehensive mode of referentiality," that "must exceed mimetic reflection in order to become an interrogative mode that can press upon the real at the point of maximum contradiction"; a technique that may signify "not the presence of the miraculous per se but an elasticity and a capacity for wonder on the part of the listener/viewer/reader that can give the quality of a revelation." As such, even at its most otherworldly, marvelous realism claims filiation with earlier efforts to capture the haunting reflexivity of novelistic distance: the gothic; the historical novel; the Indians and the wilderness of North American romance; the spectral voices of free indirect discourse.

Doris Sommer and George Yudice

Latin American Literature from the "Boom" On

Contemporary writing in Latin America begins by being, if not postmodernist, then at least paramodernist, for it has never accommodated, feature for feature, the hegemonic Western modernist episteme from its inception in the early seventeenth century to its high modernist swan song in the first three decades of the twentieth century.[1] We could say that the 1960s "Boom" in Latin American literature takes its point of departure from the high modernists' (Joyce, Kafka, Faulkner) ambivalence (hostility, destruction, and nostalgia) toward a waning modernist discourse. This is true in part. But to favor such a criterion is mistakenly to recognize Latin American culture as the product of European (or Western) history, suffering by comparison in a kind of culturally unequal development.[2] Latin American literature, for example, may be seen as an echo of Western literature: Jorge Luis Borges "repeats" and even plagiarizes "our" Western heritage; Julio Cortázar continues Kafka; Gabriel García Márquez tropicalizes Faulkner; Guillermo Cabrera Infante Cubanizes Joyce. It can be read as an exercise in deference, although very often resulting in parody, whether by default or intentioned irreverence. In this spirit, Cortázar celebrated Lezama Lima's unselfconscious borrowing and deformation of European texts which become mere raw material in the purposefully naïve American hand.[3] Finally, Latin American literature has also been understood as an expression of national or regional identity that is discontinuous with foreign models.[4]

These views may not be mutually exclusive; rather, the Boom's combination of admiration for the First World masters and their parodic manipulation helps account for its enormous international success. A typical, and to a great degree justified, impression would read as follows: Latin American literature, especially narrative, hit the international literary scene like a tornado, leaving behind a path strewn with prestigious literary prizes and starry-eyed, awed, and even envious writers from the European and North American centers of "World" culture. While the literary vanguard in these centers turned out grey experiments in technical minutiae (Robbe-Grillet, Sarraute, Sánchez Ferlosio), smoggy skyscapes of alienation (Butor, Updike), precious dry drolleries (Barthelme, Pynchon), humorless disquisitions on/of *écriture* (Sollers, Ricardou), Latin Americans dazzled the reader with crystalline lucidities (Borges), moving renderings of madness (Sabato, Cortázar) and violence (Vargas

Llosa), larger than life portrayals of power and corruption (Fuentes, García Márquez), ebullient baroque recreations of tropical culture (Carpentier, Souza, Amado, Cabrera Infante, Sarduy).

But it was more than an explosion of narrative creativity; in fact, some observers are skeptical about the amount of work produced during that decade, pointing out that many of the books published then were formerly ignored works that represented a backlog for publishers to exploit once interest in Latin America had been established. The real explosion, then, may not be in the production of literature, but in its reception and market distribution. At home the process of modernization begun in the 1930s, and greatly enhanced by the period of import substitution industrialization of the 1940s and 1950s, was finally showing results in the field of mass communications. New consumer magazines such as *Primera plana* and *Siempre,* as well as major newspaper literary supplements, not only created a new reading public, but also provided the means (along with radio and TV variety shows) for transforming the writer into a superstar on a par with singers and movie celebrities.[5] And thanks to parallel advances in education, for the first time Latin American writers could count on a broad readership. At the same time, Spain's publishing capacities helped to launch the Boom by breaking the regional deadlock that often consigned novels to their national boundaries. On strictly commercial terms, the Boom may be said to begin with Seix Barral's publication and promotion of Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Time of the Hero* (1963), which coincided with Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch,* published in Argentina. After this date printings of major authors' works jumped from the standard first edition of 3,000 copies to 25,000 in the case of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967). The masters of previous generations (Borges, Rulfo, Carpentier, and so on) rode these writers' coattails with equally sizable printings and reprintings.

It is important to bear in mind that subsequent reprintings of earlier works by Boom authors rose as well to 20,000 and upwards per year, not to mention 100,000 per year for García Márquez's blockbuster from 1968 on.[6] The phenomenal success of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is something of an irony in the Boom canon. True, it has many of the experimental features of other new novels, principally a narrative line that manages to circle around to a dead end and a series of characters who are virtually forced into self-reflexivity. But this may be the only Boom novel consistently narrated in the third person, a strategy that seduces the reader into mistaking the discontinuity of the narrative line for a coherence associated with oral storytelling. Of course, it may be objected that given the multigenerational, epic quality of the book the omniscient voice is unavoidable. But this only begs the question of why García Márquez chose to write an epic. One possible reason is that, unlike its contemporaries, this novel prefigures a post-Boom concern with rewriting national history.

The appeal to foreign readers, no doubt, owed something to their degree of familiarity with or preparedness for the Latin American extensions of a European, sometimes called universal, literary tradition. That very familiarity

allowed them to appreciate how the supplements to that tradition were unpredictable and refreshing. Spanish-Americans exploited the lessons of the modernists to their own ends, maintaining a tenuous or paradoxical balance between aesthetic experimentation and ethico-political motivation. While contemporary writers in France were cultivating the glossy stasis of the *nouveau roman,* Latin Americans offered something more dynamic and more ironic than despairing. This is one example of how a delayed and displaced response to First World intellectual trends results in the sophistication (without jadedness) of latecomers.

If the Boom is already post- or paramodern by definition, then the generation of the 1970s and 1980s cannot but be so. Yet the term may mislead us if we imagine the more recent literature to share the general obsession of Boom writers for ever more flashy technical displays. Nor do they share the earlier taste for a universal literature in which continental and regional peculiarities are crossed out under the marks of an international intellectual elite. We will refer below to some of the newer developments, especially to the efforts to renegotiate the balance between politics and experimental writing that went bust in the Boom.

Literature Ex Nihilo

Boom writers generally hated to admit any debt to earlier Latin American writers. If they had any "anxiety of influence," it was resolved by a round repudiation of local literary fathers. Their sudden burst onto the scene, with the freedom of orphanhood, was marked by a surge in regional euphoria, partly created and partly exploited by the mass consciousness industries. Add to this the liberatory possibilities and the attention provoked by the triumph of Castro in 1959, and you get an inflated belief in Latin America's final coming of age. It had finally begun to overcome economic dependency by naming it, and it had begun to formulate a cultural independence by cannibalizing European traditions. In the belief that the new literature had *invented* a truly proper language, it seemed that the Adamic dream had come true. Latin Americans could finally (re)name the world and, in doing so, name themselves. Caliban could finally possess his own kingdom.

For its authors and critical fellow travelers, the new literature was identified as revolutionary, no longer in simple metaphorical terms, but rather as a constitutive power. Unlike European writers who confronted their powerlessness (vis-á-vis the totalizing alienation and reification of the bourgeois order) precisely by cherishing, even savoring, their ennui (from Baudelaire to Butor, from Stendhal to Sollers), Latin American writers had reason to be euphoric regarding their praxis, which they undertook like a vindicating social cause:

> if we Hispano-Americans are capable of creating our own model of progress [as compared to Western technocratic models], then our language is the only vehicle that can give form, propose goals, establish priorities, elaborate critiques of a given way of life: of saying everything that cannot be said in any

other way. I believe that in Spanish America there are novels being written and to be written which, when such a consciousness is attained, will provide the necessary instruments to drink the water and the fruits of our true identity.[7]

Despite, or perhaps because of, these protestations, the authors were in fact affirming their debts to a Latin American past. If the Boom novelists imagine themselves suddenly born into full maturity, like Athena from Zeus' head, this may indicate how secure their position is in an American tradition of writing. Similarly, other American writers of both the North and South have imagined that history begins anew with them. Perhaps this is only a radical formulation of an assumption in Western letters since the Middle Ages: that is, new texts mark new beginnings. Jorge Luis Borges's essay about "The Wall and the Books" jokes about the repetitive circularity and the impossible pride of starting anew; when the emperor of China orders the Great Wall to be built and all books before his reign to be burned, he already sensed that a future emperor would erase his epoch-founding work with another new beginning. Borges, the American writer, is evidently amused but fascinated with the paradox of a tradition built on disdain for the past. Like its political history, Latin America's paradoxical literary history is a series of efforts to catch up with the centers of power in order to achieve a real independence from them. It is significant that post-Boom writers are conscious that the First World has finally caught up with the dysfunctionality of modernism experienced by Latin Americans since their beginnings. This dysfunctionality, as Octavio Paz had already noted in 1950, made them "contemporaries of all mankind": "We Mexicans have always lived on the periphery of history. Now the center or nucleus of world society has disintegrated and everyone—including the European and the North American—is a peripheral being. We are all living on the margin because there is no longer any center."[8] Latin American authors, then, should no longer be preoccupied with this necessarily frustrating desire, just as they have also abandoned any belief in developmentalism.

In economic terms, the effort to emulate a putative center is called modernization, a process by which Latin American nations have come to participate directly in the capitalist world economy. The process has a specificity that cannot be thought of as a reflection of development in the metropolitan centers of Europe, the United States, and Japan. Rather, it accounts for the creation of social formations in which the modern and the traditional (or precapitalist) are progressively brought into contact, causing profound, often violent socioeconomic tensions. These tensions are expressed in the conflicts between elite and popular cultures as well as between universalizing and local or regional tendencies, so visibly manifested since Independence (early nineteenth century) and repeatedly coming to a head: at the turn of the century, during the Depression, and again since the 1960s. These periods also mark off successive literary movements whose goal it has been to produce a national or a continental literature on an equal footing with that of Europe and other metropolitan centers.

After Independence, and faced with the necessity to consolidate the

newly formed nations, the writer-statesman strove to establish a new culture by, paradoxically, drawing on European progress (or civilization) against a native barbarism. The paradox is easily explained when we remember that Europe, especially England, was consolidating its mercantile interests in the New World under the mottos of freedom (of trade and from slavery) as against the self-defeating monopoly of Spain. The progressive Europeanizing fathers of the Latin American nations wanted to enter the international community by establishing harmony at home. First, they literally had to husband their Land, to domesticate and reproduce themselves on *her,* now that the usurping Spanish rivals for her love had been ousted. The challenge was not only to tame the Land, but to populate her; for in the absence of genealogical rights to America, the fathers had to legitimate their dominion through conjugal and then paternity rights. This brand of domestic heroism was plotted out in a series of sentimental novels that combined the personal and the political goals of establishing a legitimate family: for example, *Soledad* (1847, Solitude) by Bartolomé Mitre, *Amalia* (1855) by José Marmol, *Maria* (1867) by Jorge Isaacs, *Martin Rivas* (1862) by Alberto Blest Gana, and *Enriquillo* (1882) by Manuel de Jesus Galván. The national romance continued to be a model for the writer-statesman at least through the 1940s when populism adopted its gender-coded and rectilinear form. The best example is probably Rómulo Gallegos' *Doña Barbara* (1928). That the romance has a long afterlife is evident, for example, from the publishing success of Cuban Manuel Cofiño López's *The Last Woman and the Next Struggle* (1971).[9] When Carlos Fuentes hastily celebrates its demise, he calls this heroic and self-confident narrative model populist. The new novel, by contrast, is marked by a circularity that doubts the relationship between history and progress (Fuentes, p. 12).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the rational patriarchal habit of combining literary and political responsibilities became somewhat outmoded, mostly because of the prosperity and political bureaucratization that capitalist progress had brought. This corresponds to the imperial phase of European capitalism which began to develop the infrastructure of Latin America, including industrialization and urbanization, channels of transport and communication, bringing Latin American intellectuals up to date with Europe. With the exception of José Martí and very few others, most writers felt that the fathers had already done their job and that now art could be free from instrumentality. They were the *modernistas,* led by Rubén Darío, and like the predecessors they repudiated, they availed themselves of the latest developments in European letters (i.e., Parnassianism, symbolism) in order to break with the colonialist legacy and enter modernity.

The avant-garde movements of the 1920s and 1930s, which also proclaimed a new culture that would supersede the past, were evenly split between those who, while not imitating nature, would parallel its processes, just as they would parallel and outdo Europe (the Ultraist Borges, Vicente Huidobro, and so on), and those who would recuperate and reconstitute a native culture (César Vallejo, Pablo Antonio Cuadra, Mario de Andrade, Miguel Ángel Asturias). That period corresponds to the boom and bust experienced between the two world wars. Economic prosperity after World War I intensified indus-

trialization and urbanization, bringing to a head inherent contradictions. Greater industrial prosperity entailed greater proletarianization and a rise in worker consciousness; it also intensified the conflict between local metropolitan centers such as Buenos Aires, Lima, and Mexico, and the interior provinces where raw materials were produced under onerous conditions by peasants and Indians. This accounts, in part, for the conflict between cosmopolitan and regional/nativist vanguardists.

The literary Boom of the 1960s, then, is a break with the past in a tradition of similar breaks, to use Paz's phrase; it repeats the desire for autonomy through cultural production, paradoxically making use of its respective modernist legacy. Like the historical context of other avantgardists, this one coincides with the rapid development of national economies under the tutelage of the post–World War II transnational economic order. The belief in cultural autonomy that characterizes Boom literature may be considered part of the *apertura* (openness) that takes place during the 1960s.[10] That is, the period spanning decolonization (the term Third World is coined at this time), the Cuban Revolution (1959), the civil rights movement in the United States, and the Cultural Revolution in China (1965–1969). Cuba acted as a catalyst for a tacit unity among Latin American writers of varied political sympathies; its revolution initiated a period of reflexivity when projects were rethought on every level—the economic, the political, the literary. The unity declines, however, with the imminent closure signaled by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968) and comes to its end with the overthrow of Allende (1973). Decolonization and the ultimate penetration of global industrialization go hand in hand such that the "last vestiges of nature"—the Third World and the unconscious—are transformed.[11] It could be said that the attention given Latin American literature during this period is, in part, due to this global transformation.

The *apertura* manifested itself as a series of contradictory experiences. On the one hand, most Latin American intellectuals and writers espoused a revolutionary discourse expressed either through the (Cuban) notion of praxis (armed struggle) or by the Boom's promulgation of liberation through language. On the other hand, their optimistic espousal of technological development (including the growth of an international publishing and promotion industry) was also, ironically, part of the global capitalization of all spheres of life; it not only made the explosion of subversive books possible, but also tended to neutralize their effect.

Like the *modernistas* who deplored the vulgarity of capitalism but profited from the freedom it brought, Boom writers enjoyed the double liberty of earning fame and often money, thanks to general modernization, especially in mass communications, while denigrating or, at least, ironizing modern times. Therefore, as regards literature, modernization made experimentation visible. The role of the mass media becomes crucial when one stops to consider the fact that, although the (mostly Southern Cone) *vanguardistas* (Borges, Macedonio Fernandez, Felisberto Hernandez, Juan Emar, Rosamel del Valle, Huidobro, and so on) had already effected a change in writing, by subverting narrative closure, deconstructing author and work, their texts were virtually

unknown to the reading public precisely because there were no adequate means of circulation and publicity.

Clearly, many Boom writers condemn the advent of social technification:

> We're running full speed in this rat race, we're subjected like any Frenchman or gringo to the world of competition and status symbols, the world of neon lights and Sears Roebuck and washing machines and James Bond movies and Campbell soup cans.[12]

> The unreachable nature of the technological vanguard obliges us to revise our notions of "progress" and conclude that what today passes as such—the North American model—is not, can no longer be, will never be ours, like Tantalus's water and fruit. In the impossible race towards the impossible mirage even our own language becomes dispensable; Spanish will not be the language of that "progress"; before it, our language is but another junkyard on the side of the super highway, a cemetery of useless cars (Fuentes, p. 97). *La nueva novela.*

And yet his espousal of the *opera aperta* (Fuentes, p. 31), with all its attendant aesthetic techniques—ambiguity through polysemy, allusion, irony, shifting point of view, spatialization of time, exploration of different levels of consciousness—shows just the opposite. He not only revels in the margins to which technology has relegated his writing, but he also adopts the technocrat's skill at manipulating the unstable functions of modern society.

A Technico-Aesthetic Checklist

Unlike the technocrats, however, Boom writers do not credit themselves with the right and rational answers. Instead, they make a point of undermining traditional authorial control, fragmenting it along with characterization, time, and language. As much as this tendency owes to the lessons of European high modernism, it owes to the sense of disappointment in the political and economic authors of Latin America with whom the novelists maintain, even against their will, a historical connection. Modernization had brought some prosperity, especially during the period of import substitution. But by the same capitalist logic it was reaching some deadends ever since the 1950s when imports began again to flood the Latin American markets. The evolutionary, rectilinear models of developmentalism, and their parallel national romances, simply were not going to deliver what the progressive fathers, or authors, of Latin American nationalism had promised. The Boom had benefited from modernization, but limits were already in view. One consequence was the high degree of writerly sophistication that questioned the author's or any one leader's (advis)ability to control narrative.[13]

Demoting, or defusing, the authorial voice was part of a general experimental strategy to break up the straight line of historical myths. Radical formal experimentation is, in fact, the Boom's most distinguishing feature. It can be understood as an aesthetic expression of the historical *apertura* of the 1960s in which mass culture played a major role. Indeed, as in a feedback circuit, mass culture and literature now interpenetrated each other, to the point that

Cortázar's *Hopscotch* makes references to jazz, Eisenstein, Dos Passos, and so on; Fuentes mythifies the movie star in *Holy Place* (1967) and incorporates lists of favorite readings, movie and magazine photos in *A Change of Skin* (1967); and Cabrera Infante carnivalizes Western high and pop culture in *Three Trapped Tigers* (1967); while Vargas Llosa's personal romance gets contaminated with the clichés of radio melodrama in *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (1977). We could further characterize this *apertura* as expressing a period of radical change in which *heteroglossia* destabilized social and cultural formations.[14] Novelistic discourse, as Mikhail Bakhtin conceives it, is not a genre proper but precisely that which undermines stable formations. It is therefore particularly appropriate for the self-reflexivity that periods of change bring on and helps to explain why the Boom phenomenon has a narrative semblance.

By contrast with the novels of the 1960s, earlier and more predictable books about national identity form a genre that can be called romance. Of course, writers like Borges, Juan Rulfo, and Felisbento Hernandez, among others, fit neither category; they wrote essentially short fiction and helped to prepare the technical armory of the new generation. Its self-conscious experimentation challenges the institutionalized concept of the work of art as a coherent and perfected totality along with the program for a national self-improvement of the romances. With the exception of Borges (and his elitist circle organized around the journal *Sur*), the Boom writers were the first to challenge not so much the aestheticist view of art, but rather the diverse social realisms (e.g., *indigenismo, novela telurica,* subgenres of the national romance) which pretended to represent the social order or disorder. Instead, literature was now read as a series of fragments, reminiscent of Novalis' experiments in the early days of German Romanticism, acknowledging the disjuncture of perceptions and experience and rejecting the impulse to imprison narrative in neat and predictable plots and points of view.

Formal experimentation and self-consciousness go hand in hand with another dominant feature of Boom narrative; that is, self-reflexivity in relation to cultural and national identity. We have already quoted Fuentes regarding the exploration of Latin American identity, its national histories and myths, in order to construct a new literary language that can serve as a standard of value and the warrant for a proper identity. This may seem to be a contradiction, for one of the categories which the new narrative attempts to deconstruct is precisely that of established identities. How, then, can these writers reconcile myth and its deconstruction, especially in a mass culture that devalues particular national identities?

We can broach this contradiction by considering Severo Sarduy, the most radical of Latin American deconstructors of discursive authority.[15] According to him, Latin American literature tends toward the baroque because its language, its materiality (he might say corporeality) is an interplay of discourses that masks an absent or ever displaced warrant. Artificiality, resulting from the play of signifiers and erotic guises, becomes the revolutionary way of being of the marginal Latin American.[16] Sarduy draws on Lezama Lima's *Paradiso* (1966) and on Cabrera Infante's *Three Trapped Tigers* to illustrate his theory. His own *Where the Singers Come From* (1967) is an equally good example of the

deconstruction of authorship, the fragmentation of character, and the dissemination of intertexts. What is most significant and goes beyond the simple echo of a nascent French poststructuralism, based on Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Julia Kristeva's appropriation of Bakhtin, is Sarduy's insistence that such artificiality and superimposition of citations and discourses constitute an oblique representation of "Cubanness."

> There is a stereophony in the Cuban language. I would even say that there is some sort of incapacity in the Cuban to deal with the national in a direct way. The topic is always broached indirectly, alluding to something else. Cuban literature, therefore, has taken shape as a superimposition of strata. And the Baroque is just that (. . .) I have converted the discourse on Cubanness into a true anamorphosis in which nothing is seen frontally, everything appears marginally, tangentially. We can't have direct access to representation, perception, the image. The only access is lateral, from the borders of representation.[17]

Sarduy's novel can be understood as a *Curriculum Cubense,* a (dis)course through "Three cultures—Spanish, African and Chinese—[which] have been superimposed to constitute the Cuban; the three fictions which allude to these cultures constitute this book."[18]

The waning of Latin American authenticity which critics like Jean Franco attribute to the Boom turns out to be in writers like Sarduy, paradoxically, a greater form of authenticity because it recognizes the heterogeneous and constructed quality of Latin American identity. *Écriture* becomes identity. To this anti-bourgeois and utopian reversal of capitalist progress, Franco objects that it is a private utopia not only permissible within the world system but, even worse, also the expression of the logic of late capitalism.[19] Be that as it may, Sarduy's important contribution to the polemic between nativists (Americanists and so on) and cosmopolitans is that Latin American culture is always an interplay of heterogeneous discourses. Under another label, borrowed from another Cuban, Fernando Ortiz, Angel Rama characterizes this interplay as a transculturation: the mediation between two or more cultures from the perspective of one's native context.[20] Rama uses the concept to vindicate (and justly so) those writers like Brazilian João Guimarães Rosa, Mexican Juan Rulfo, and Peruvian José María Arguedas who, though widely published, were not canonized within the Boom pantheon precisely because of their adherence to indigenous (and oral) formations. They went beyond the mere reproduction of myth in their construal of "the mental operations that generate myth by working on indigenous tradition and Western modernization," bringing them together "to the point of becoming indistinct, in an exercise of 'mythical thinking.'"[21]

The tension between modern and traditional claims on the authors, which characterizes regional (e.g., Arguedas) and urban (e.g., Cabrera Infante) transculturators alike can also be understood as a form of resistance. This is not to say that there are not different modes of expressing this resistance. There are, and they break down according to geocultural, gender, and class lines. Arguedas represents the solidarity of the Andean with his or her threatened peasant Indian heritage. Cabrera Infante represents the alienated

tropical casino-consumer culture of a Cuban middle class intimately tied to U.S. interests. Luis Rafael Sanchez reworks this tension in *Macho Camacho's Beat* (1976) by making "Spanglish" not only the mark of Yankee corruption in Puerto Rico, but also the literary language in which Puerto Ricans sparkle.

The point is not so much that the canonical Boom reproduces the logic of late capitalism but rather that transculturation is experienced and expressed differentially in the texture of these authors' works. For example, the Quechua substratum endows the Spanish of Arguedas's *Deep Rivers* (1957) with a nominalist world view, not so much in a Whorfian or Sapirian sense (according to which language cuts the thought grooves of our imagination) but, rather, in a Vološinovian-Bakhtinian sense in which the word embodies *heteroglossia,* reverberates with the multiaccentuated tonalities of a changing social context.[22] Cabrera Infante's masterly pastiche and word-play also instantiate the texture of a changing social context (a decadent dependent culture on the eve of revolution) which is conceived as meaningless. Although Arguedas incarnates his language with a social sense rooted in the experience of the dominated classes, Cabrera Infante renders his senseless (in the experience of his alienated "bohemians"), though not without a palpable reference to a social situation. For Arguedas the word has social and ritual depth; for Cabrera Infante it weaves the surface texture poised over an exhilarating and nostalgic sense of loss. We dwell on the comparison between these two writers because it illustrates a major debate regarding the Boom's authenticity.[23] It also shows how the canonical writers, in conjunction with the mass media, managed to project their own literary project as the Latin American model, reducing and controlling the very *heteroglossia* that inheres in transculturation.

Latin American literature, then, does not fit comfortably into the category of postmodernism. On the one hand, it shares the postmodernist concern for the marginal, an ambiguous concept that has economic, sociological, and literary meanings. On the other, it is too concerned with its own identity to serve as the sheer surface on which a hegemonic postmodern culture mirrors itself. This was true of Latin American literature long before the Boom, despite the impression that the 1960s suddenly erupted with the work of the Canonical Four (Cortázar, Vargas Llosa, Fuentes, García Márquez). The fact that publishing enjoyed a boom during the 1960s is due just as much, if not more, to a 30- to 40-year backlog of important literary works that were reprinted in this period.[24] The presentation of several generations of writers under the hegemony of the Boom canceled out the chronology of Latin American literature, dehistoricizing it and projecting it as something new. This fact helps to explain why the literary market underwent a deflation during the 1970s and 1980s. The major publishing houses rode this wave of backlog reprintings until they ran out of a large enough supply of trademark authors to meet the demands of the public and of their own marketing schemes. Furthermore, by the mid-1970s the publishing business had changed such that the houses, having undergone the transformations required to compete in a climate of transnational economic rationality, began to produce fewer titles in ever larger printings hoping to score big with best-sellers. These changes had their repercussions on the writers who, like Cortázar, for example, rushed to

get out as many titles as possible even if their books (e.g., *Octahedron,* 1974, *A Manual for Manuel,* 1973) had not been finished to their satisfaction.[25]

These strategies failed for reasons beyond the control of the publishing houses and the writers. We have already made reference to the political and economic closure that cut short the optimistic *apertura* enjoyed during the 1960s. The net result of this closure was the realization that the Boom, having proclaimed liberation and the end of ideology, was mostly an illusion. This is borne out by René Avilez Fabila's 1970 tongue-in-cheek recipe for writing Boom novels (i.e., make a collage of the quasi-pompous and pedantic references to literature, film, painting, and Pop culture endowed with a prestige of countercultural codes),[26] as well as José Donoso's *Personal History of the Boom* (1972), where the frustrated desire of celebrity transforms into the ironic realization that the Boom is nothing but a tinseled float on parade.

As for the effervescent reception of Latin American writers in Europe and North America, this also turns out to have been an inflationary illusion. To be sure, there is some interest in the literary quality and the cultural peculiarities of Latin American literary production. The majority of reviews, however, indicate that the dominant interest is otherwise: either a prurient fascination with the exotic or the confirmation of one's own discourse. Thus, one can read about Latin American "brutalities" and "intoxicated joy,"[27] and watch Sarduy strike a resonant chord in such enthusiasts of erotico-revolutionary *écriture* as Barthes and Cixous.[28] Similarly, Fuentes appeals to an Italian readership because his *A Change of Skin* (1974) deals with fascism.[29] The figures regarding translations are also misleading: "while there are numerous translations that signal a new distributionary phenomenon, the small printings and reprintings undo that impression."[30]

Fragmentation of the Canon: The Dissemination of Marginalia

With a kind of poetic justice, the fetishization of the privileged marginality of the canonical Boom soon gives way to other voices which the canon itself had marginalized. In fact, the differential nature of regions and cultures highlights the most significant feature of the many currents and tendencies characterizing Latin American literature since the Boom: the vindication of marginality and ex-centricity. The classics of the Boom are predominantly metropolitan. As the hegemony of the Boom begins to fade at the beginning of the 1970s, a cacophony of marginal voices can be heard. This is not to say that they didn't exist before and during the Boom, but, rather, that they were drowned out by its din.

To be sure, there are important exceptions such as the homoerotic *écriture* of Sarduy and Manuel Puig. Héctor Libertella, following Emir Rodriguez Monegal, has attempted to privilege *écriture,* the *novela del lenguaje* (the novel of/about language), as the offspring of the *Aufhebung* or sublation of the Boom. In this view, language is foregrounded, banishing any notion of reference from the text in accordance with its semiotic autonomy.[31] Consequently, a writer cannot be assured that his or her intended meanings will be conveyed, making it impossible for literature to bear his or her social engagement. Novels such as José Donoso's *A House in the Country* (1977) and Enrique Lihn's *The Crystal Orchestra* (1968) and *The Art of Speech* (1980) construe Latin American

reality as a trompe l'oeil (Donoso) or a phantasmal (Foucauldian) archive, conveying obliquely the hallucinatory terror of life in Pinochet's Chile. These works, however, continue to fit the canon because of their dependence on metropolitan phenomena: pop culture and Parisian theory.

By contrast, Central American writers, to give one example, are now cultivating a type of writing that incorporates the language and world view of the peasant (Claribel Alegría, Menlio Argueta, Alfonso Chase, Sergio Ramirez, and so on). This does not mean, however, that they necessarily revive "enterprises already mapped out in the social regionalism of the forties," as Angel Rama might have it.[32] Such an opinion would benefit a certain viewpoint in which the urban, the most modernized, sets the trend.

In some cases, the masters of the Boom themselves moved away from the canon. Both Cortázar and Vargas Llosa, for example, abandoned the extravagant formal experimentation of *Hopscotch* and *The Green House* and drifted toward certain modes of realism: *A Manual for Manuel* and *Captain Pantoja and the Special Service* (by Cortázar) and *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (by Vargas Llosa). García Márquez left behind the radical "marvelous realism" and self-referential *écriture* of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and moved on to the overflowing orality of *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975) and the elaborate, yet stark, reportage of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981). Furthermore, the "dictator novels" that appeared in 1974–1975, García Márquez's *The Autumn,* Carpentier's *Reasons of State* (1974), Roa Bastos' *I the Supreme* (1975)—Donoso's *Casa de campo,* though later, could be included as well—focus on a representational topic that had a certain ascendancy much before the heyday of the Boom (e.g., Asturias' *El Señor Presidente,* 1946). But now they both deconstruct the centralizing power that underlies the concept of dictatorship, and suggest a relationship between dictators and those who dare to write after the Boom when writers worried collectively about the authoritarian traps set by narrative and representation.[33]

The remainder of this article outlines the diverse (mostly realist) literary currents that were overshadowed by or emerged after the Boom.

Regionalism. By this we do not refer to either realism à la the nineteenth-century bourgeois novel or to socialist realism. Rather than a rationalist analysis of society, we have a highly plastic linguistic representation of transculturation in regionalists such as the Peruvian José María Arguedas, the Mexican Juan Rulfo, and the Brazilian João Guimarães Rosa. This is a realism conditioned by traditional modes of thought and by the dynamism of the avant-garde. We might also mention the marvelous realism of the Cuban Alejo Carpentier and the magic realism of the Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias. Both directions of transculturation are at play in these writers: the penetration and transformation of Western discourse in the noncategorizable setting of America, in the case of Carpentier; the penetration of myth and Indian experience in narrative discourse in Asturias's case.

Women's Writing. Life at the margin of the Boom gave new space to women who would cultivate a variety of styles whose general hallmark was

the combination of the intensely personal and sexual with what is generally considered to be the political sphere. Clarice Lispector, doyenne of Latin American women writers, gives expression to the intimacies of a woman's life in *Near the Savage Heart* (1944); Rosario Ferré (Puerto Rico) explores the contradictions of class hegemony and gender subordination in *Pandora's Papers* (1976); Luisa Valenzuela (Argentina), author of *Strange Things Are Happening Here* (1975) and *The Lizard's Tail* (1983), has moved progressively to a condemnation of political repression through the subversive caricature of the sexual fantasies at the basis of tyrannical power; Fanny Buitrago (Colombia) is best known for her *Los Pañamanes* (1979); and there is the scandalously explicit sexuality of Reina Roffé (Argentina) and Ana Istaru (Costa Rica). Women have distinguished themselves as much in categories other than the predominantly personal-sexual: for example, Elena Poniatowska and Claribel Alegría in the politically motivated testimonial genre, as is noted below.

Jewish Cultural Regionalism. If marginality can be understood not only geographically, but also in cultural and linguistic terms, then Jewish writers also manifest the return of a repressed regionalism after the Boom. In Argentina, with the largest Jewish population in Latin America, the question of Jewishness had been given dramatic expression by German Rozenmacher contemporaneously with the Boom. As a critical category, however, Jewish writing does not emerge until the 1970s. It includes such writers as Mario Szichman (Argentina), whose novels, from *False Chronicle* (1969) to *At 8:25 pm the Woman Entered the Realm of Immortality* (1980), chronicle the life of the Pechofs, a family of Polish immigrants, in an elitist Argentina; Isaac Goldemberg (Peru), who portrays the unusual social position of his half-Jewish, half-Indian protagonist in *The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo* (1978); Isaac Chocrón and Elisa Lerner who deal with similar problems of accommodation in the Venezuelan context. This category could be considered as a subgenre of urban critical realism.

Urban Critical Realism. Still tied to the ethical concerns of existentialism, the critical realists trace the movements of modern Latin Americans in an alienating urban setting. This current runs the gamut from the highly imaginary representations of Juan Carlos Onetti (Uruguay), to the universal paranoia which Ernesto Sabato (Argentina) detects in the modern individual, the effects of political repression in Argentina in David Viñas's work, and the Marxist critique and commitment to revolution in José Revueltas (Mexico).

Whether regionalist, as in the case of Marcio Souza (Brazil), whom we have already mentioned, or urban, as in Ricardo Piglia (Argentina), more recent generations of writers are decidedly nationalist. Piglia's *Artificial Respiration* (1980), for example, is not an exercise in a translucent *écriture.* On the contrary, the novel is the inscription of the genealogy of oppositional Argentine writers, with the noted urban realist Roberto Arlt in the backround the whole time. Writing becomes the means to vindicate the marginal, the characters who comprise another Argentine history, not the abstract marginality of a Borges.

If the realism of Argentine writers expresses itself in relation to outward political repression, the younger generation of Mexican novelists attempts to capture the workings of an internalized system of repressive desublimation. In 1968 the Tlatelolco massacre became a dominant concern for Mexican writers. Representations of state power and repression were traditionally organized around images of the pyramid, the site of ritual sacrifice, as Octavio Paz explained in *Posdata.* Despite chronic economic crisis, after 1968 democratization permitted oppositional discourse. But with the shift from state order to a social order in which individuals respond to an invisible, dispersed control through the mass consciousness industries, it was no longer possible to represent and oppose power by "incorporating public discourse into the novel."[34] David Ojeda's *The Conditions of War* (1978), Guillermo Samperio's *Lenin in Soccer* (1977), and Jorge Aguilar Mora's *A Corpse Full of Earth* (1971) now represent this absence of the social.

The Return of History. With the revival of nationalist concerns there has been a renewed interest in national history. Although the majority of the dictator novels of the 1970s do not deal with specific dictators, it is Latin American history which motivates the composite wielders of power. It is also significant that this genre reemerges precisely when a new round of dictators has taken possession of the Southern Cone. In a sense, then, the representation of the dictator in Latin America's history is also a meditation and critique of this form of power in the present context. Written in the wake of poststructuralist critiques of power, these novels deconstruct the magic with which the dictator was traditionally thought to be invested.

The one exception to the composite figuration of power is Augusto Roa Bastos' *I the Supreme* (1974). Woven together from 20,000 documents which Roa Bastos researched over many years, the discourse deconstructs traditional notions of author and character in ways much more radical than any Boom text. *Écriture,* textuality, undoes the dictatorial (oral) power of Dr. Francia, whom Thomas Carlyle had characterized as the Dionysius of Paraguay, referring, no doubt, to the deity's mad display of power in Argos as an analogue for the dictator's Reign of Terror.[35] Like Borges, Roa Bastos constructs or compiles—the narrator is identified as a compiler—a utopian or heterotopian discursive space. Unlike the Argentine's *Absolute Book,* which contains endless repetitions of the same, Roa Bastos' compilation is a tribute to a history that had yet to be written, reproducing the weave of voices that had been left out in previous accounts. In other words, textuality here is the voice of the people, many people.

History has become the concern of so many writers since the Boom that there is not enough space here to mention all of them. A significant non-example, however, should be mentioned for the sake of contrast; it is Fuentes's *Terra Nostra* (1975) which proposes historical challenges and resorts to prescribed mythical resolutions. More open-ended structures of history are at the center of texts like *Palinurus of Mexico* (1977) by Fernando del Paso, *The Harp and the Shadow* (1978) by Alejo Carpentier (Cuba), *The Sea of Lentils* (1978) by Antonio Benítez Rojo (Cuba), *From April Onwards* (1975) by Marcio Veloz

Maggiolo (Dominican Republic), *When They Loved the Communal Lands* (1978) by Pedro Mir (Dominican Republic), *Latin Homerica* (1979) by Marta Traba (Argentina), and *Memory of Fire,* Vol. 1 (1982) by Eduardo Galeano. In the last work, for example, the Uruguayan journalist and novelist projects a monumental trilogy in which he pretends to rewrite the documents of Latin American cultural history from pre-Columbian times to the present.

Documentary and Testimonial Narrative. Interestingly enough, the concern with history evidently includes the desire to chronicle major social and political upheavals in the present. This is not to say that the testimonial is a new genre; personal accounts of historical events were written long before the 1960s. Rather, what is new is the literary and political attention given the testimonial. One important example is Rodolfo Walsh's *Operation Massacre* (1957) which, anticipating the documentary techniques used by Truman Capote, chronicles in literary fashion a 1956 massacre of a group of men who were thought to be Peronist sympathizers conspiring to overthrow the government. Perhaps the most important historical event of the twentieth century in our hemisphere, the Cuban Revolution, the "assault on the impossible," according to Mario Benedetti, begot myriad accounts from all sides of the struggle, and not least from the participants themselves, beginning with Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara. The very category of testimonial narrative was included by the Casa de las Américas editorial board among the other (traditional) genres in the journal's yearly prizes. Its ideological purpose was, no doubt, to portray the people as the agents of their own history. Whether or not the genre would have flourished without this stimulus is beside the point. The fact is that the testimonial narrative is now one of the most cultivated literary forms, by both sympathizers and critics of the revolution. Carlos Franqui's *Family Portrait with Fidel* (1981) is a good example of the latter camp.

One of the ways in which the people can participate in making their own history is to narrate it themselves. This is one of the functions of the testimonial, put to use by the anthropologist Miguel Barnet in his arrangement of the life story of a 105-year-old former slave, received piecemeal in several interviews. *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave* (1966) radically blurs the distinctions between the literary and the ordinary. Women have also found their literary space in the testimonial. The Mexican Elena Poniatowska used a similar strategy of extended interview and first-person reconstruction in her stunning *Until I No Longer See You Dear Jesus* (1967), as did the Argentine Marta Traba in *Conversation in the South* (1981). *Let Me Speak* (1977) by Domitila Barrios de Chungara (written by Moema Viezzer), the wife of a Bolivian miner, is already a classic of testimonial literature. And the more recent *My Name is Rigoberta Menchu* (1983), the chronicle (recorded, transcribed, and arranged by anthropologist Elisabeth Burgos) of a Guatemalan Indian's use of religious community service as a weapon against oppression, promises to be one.

The decline of the Boom became evident in 1968, the year in which the Soviet Union occupied Czechoslovakia and Heberto Padilla's writing was first censured in Cuba. The same year saw the massacre at Tlatelolco, the highly symbolic Plaza of the Three Cultures, during the Olympic Games. In Mexico,

at least, the social euphoria of the 1960s came to an abrupt end by 1968. Elena Poniatowska's *The Night of Tlatelolco* (1971), although a composite of reports and fragments of interviews dealing with the massacre, derives its literary specificity from the way in which the parts are brought together. Rather than present a particular point of view, Poniatowska's work, reminiscent of Roa Bastos' compilation, captures history as it is made (told, written, reported) by its agents.

Just as *Tlatelolco* moved many writers to account for the incredible event, Pinochet's 1973 coup and the murder of Allende generated numerous and generically diverse accounts: documentary accounts by Enrique Lafourcade (*Salvador Allende,* 1973) and Hernan Valdés (*Green Rooftiles,* 1974); impassioned denunciations by Antonio Skarmeta (*I Dreamt that the Snow Was Burning,* 1975) and Fernando Alegría (*Goose Step,* 1975); and a hallucinatory allegory of power relations by José Donoso (*A House in the Country,* 1978). The case of Skarmeta is interesting in that, unable to fully give form to the plurality of voices and the epic nature of the Popular Front, thus producing a sense of failure, of lost opportunities under the Allende regime, he nonetheless achieves a triumphant documentary epic romance of the Nicaraguan Revolution in *The Insurrection* (1981).

Skarmeta's book and the objection he shares with many contemporary writers to what they call the hermeticism and elitism of the Boom lead us to the last historical event we will consider here: revolution in Central America. Unlike previous revolutions, numerous writers in both Nicaragua and El Salvador are on the front lines. Ernesto Cardenal, Rosario Murillo, Sergio Ramírez, Gioconda Belli, and Omar Cabezas Lacayo are, for example, all members of the Sandinista government. In addition, large numbers of "common" people participate in literary workshops to make writing a part of everyday life.

In literature, Central America has mostly generated poets. The greatest poet of the previous century was the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío. More recently, Salvadoran poets like Roque Dalton and Claribel Alegría have taken to writing novels and testimonial narratives. Dalton's *Poor Poet That I Was . . .* (1976) is the self-ironic account of a privileged poet in an oppressive society. Formally, it is a collage of diary, ethical, and aesthetic fragments concerning political activities and intellectual life. It is a kind of autobiographical *Libro de Manuel.* In Claribel Alegría's *No me agarran viva: La mujer salvadoreña en lucha* (1983), co-written with her husband D. J. Flakoll, she records the testimonies of Salvadoran revolutionaries regarding the death of a young bourgeois woman turned revolutionary, much like Alegría herself. Like Poniatowska and Roa Bastos, she becomes the medium through which others can tell their own and her history. *One Day of Life* (1980) by Salvadoran novelist Manlio Argueta, also a poet, is the almost impossible realization of a poetic rendering of the everyday life of a family of peasant women in a society beset by unrelenting state terror.

For all the shared features of Boom and later writing (specifically the multi-layered self-reflexivity), one major difference is already clear. Whereas the Boom writers tended to mine European and North American universal literature as well as the mass-produced and homogenizing culture of mass

communications for their pastiches, assuming that a revolution in language would liberate Latin America at all other levels, their successors generally find this procedure to be frivolous. Instead, they compile and interpret the material of everyday history, not necessarily to reconstruct the populist romances of the pre-Boom—although this is certainly a temptation—but in the best cases to play the game of deconstructive self-reflexivity for the high stakes of constructing Latin America's future history.

Notes

1. For a detailed account of the modernist episteme, see Timothy Reiss, *The Discourse of Modernism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), who renames it analytico-referential discourse, which involves "such notions as those of truth and valid experiment (in science), of referential language and representation (in all types of discourse), of possessive individualism (in political and economic theory), of contract (in sociopolitical and legal history), of taste (in aesthetic theory), of commonsense and the corresponding notion of concept (in philosophy, all of which are "hypostatizations of a particular discursive system" (pp. 13–14).

2. Such a comparison, which has been effected on numerous discursive fronts, almost always in detriment of America and as a self-serving warrant of European superiority, can be discerned in philosophy, natural science, history, religion, literature, and so on. Hegel, for example, explains that nature, in its extreme zones—intense cold or heat—is "too powerful to allow Spirit to build up a world for itself. . . . The true theatre of History is therefore the temperate zone; or, rather, its northern half." This champion of universal history goes on to point out that "the Archipelago between South America and Asia shows a physical immaturity," a statement that leads to the conclusion that "America has always shown itself physically and psychically powerless, and still shows itself so . . . A mild and passionless disposition, want of spirit, and a crouching submissiveness towards a Creole, and still more towards a European, are the chief characteristics of the native Americans; and it will be long before the Europeans succeed in producing any independence of feeling in them. The inferiority of these individuals in all respects, even in regard to size, is very manifest." America is of no interest to Hegel because it "is only an echo of the Old World—the expression of a foreign Life," and as such it has no history. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover, 1956), pp. 90–97.

Similar statements can be found in other champions of disalienation such as Engels and Marx. Engels, for example, justifies Yankee aggression toward Mexico because it is in Mexico's interest to fall under the leadership of more advanced nations such as the United States (Friedrich Engels, *Los movimientos revolucionarios de 1847,* included in the appendix to the *Manifiesto comunista* [Madrid: Cenit, 1932], p. 412). Marx, in his turn, berates Simón Bolívar as a bandit and explains that his early defeats in the War of Independence are due to his military incapacity, deriving no doubt from his general cognitive underdevelopment as a Latin American, whereas his eventual victories are made possible by assistance from the British Legion. Karl Marx, *Simon Bolivar* (Buenos Aires: Ed. de Hoy, 1959), pp. 51ff.

Information regarding Engels' and Marx's views on America can be found in Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *Bolivarismo y marxismo* (Buenos Aires: A. Pena Lillo, Editor, 1969), pp. 26–29. For the denigration of America in natural history or science, see Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World. The History of a Polemic, 1750–1900* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973).

3. See, for example, his "Approach to Lezama Lima," from *Vuelta al dia en ochenta*

mundos (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1967), recently translated by Naomi Lindstrom in *The Review of Contemporary Literature* (Fall 1983).

4. Roberto Fernandez Retamar, in his *Caliban* (Mexico: Diogenes, 1972); trans. as "Caliban, Notes Towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America," *Massachusetts Review* (Winter-Spring 1974), verges on this latter view.

5. On this issue see Jean Franco, "Narrador, autor, superestrella: la narrativa latinoamericana en la epoca de cultura de masas," *Revista Iberoamericana* 47, nos. 114–115 (enero–junio 1981): 129–48, and Angel Rama, "El boom en perspectiva," *La novela latinoamericana, 1920–1980* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura–Procultura, 1982), pp. 235–93.

6. See Rama, "El boom en perspectiva."

7. Carlos Fuentes, *La nueva novela hispanoamericana* (Mexico: Joaquin Mortiz, 1969), p. 98.

8. Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1959); originally 1960 in *Cuadernos americanos:* trans. as *The Labyrinth of Solitude. Life and Thought in Mexico* (New York: Grove Press, 1961).

9. See Doris Sommer, "National Romances and Populist Rhetoric in Spanish America," *Europe and Its Others* (Essex: 1985).

10. The following account of 1960s periodization draws on Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the Sixties," in *The Sixties without Apology,* ed. Sohnya Sayres et al. (Minneapolis/New York: University of Minnesota Press/*Social Text,* 1984), pp. 178–209.

11. According to Ernest Mandel, "Far from representing a postindustrial society, late capitalism . . . constitutes generalized universal industrialization for the first time in history. Mechanization, standardization, overspecialization and parcellization of labor, which in the past determined only the realm of commodity production in actual industry, now penetrate all sectors of social life. It is characteristic of late capitalism that agriculture is step by step becoming just as industrialized as industry, the sphere of circulation (e.g., credit cards and the like) just as much as the sphere of production, and recreation just as much as the organization of work." Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: NLB-Verso Edition, 1978), quoted in Jameson, "Periodizing the Sixties," p. 207.

12. Carlos Fuentes, quoted in Emir Rodriquez Monegal, *El arte de narrar: dialogos* (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1977), p. 132.

13. In "Modernizacion, resistencia y revolucion. La produccion literaria de los sesenta," *Escritura* 2, no. 3 (Jan.–June 1997) and "The Crisis of the Liberal Imagination," *Ideologies and Literature* 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1976–Jan. 1977), Jean Franco reduces the "new" *écriture,* whose *apertura* and play might have had subversive repercussions in a nineteenth-century setting, to a hypostatization of the technological society of late capitalism. In other words, she interprets the contradiction as a surface subversion with an accommodationist deep structure, not allowing for what seems to be, at least for us, a contradictory opposition, but opposition nonetheless.

14. For an explanation of the term *heteroglossia* as applied to literary and social discourses, see Mikhail Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" and "Discourse in the Novel" in *The Dialogical Imagination. Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin,* ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), es. pp. 61–63, 75–77, 82–83, 284–85, 301–66.

15. He may seem, however, to subscribe completely to French poststructuralist discursive authority, quoting Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Philippe Sollers, Jacques Derrida, and so on on almost every page of his essays. It is typical of the center-periphery dialectic that what subverts authority in the hegemonic center

may surface in the periphery (ever eager for some form of "revolution" that will garner its self-determination) as an authoritative model.

16. Severo Sarduy, "El barroco y el neobarroco," in *America Latina en su literatura,* ed. Cesar Fernandez Moreno (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1972), pp. 167–84.

17. From an interview—"Severo Sarduy La serpiente en las singagoga," *Vuelta* 8, no. 89 (Apr. 1984): 20—with Julia Kushingian.

18. Severo Sarduy, *De donde son los cantantes* (Mexico: Joaquin Mortiz, 1967), p. 151.

19. See Franco, "The Crisis of the Liberal Imagination," pp. 18–21.

20. Rama quotes Ortiz's definition of the concept: "We understand the word *transculturation* to better express the different phases of the transformation of one culture into another. This transformation is not so much the acquisition of another culture, which is what is strictly indicated by the Anglo-American term *acculturation;* rather, the process also necessarily implies the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which might be called a partial deculturation. Furthermore, the process signifies the consequent creation of a new cultural phenomenon which might be called *neoculturation.*" Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azucar* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1978), p. 86, quoted in Angel Rama, *Transculturacion narrative en America Latin* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1982), pp. 32–33.

21. Rama, *Transculturacion narrative,* p. 55.

22. Bakhtin's work is dedicated precisely to such changing social contexts in which "polyglossia flourishes," as in the Hellenic period which produced "Roman laughter" or as in the Middle Ages which saw the rise of parodic discourses in relation to the sacred Latin word. "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," pp. 61–64, 77.

23. According to Hernan Vidal, *Literatura hispanoamericana e ideologica liberal: surgimiento y crisis (Una problematic sobre la dependencia en torno a la narrativa del boom)* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Hispamerica, 1976), the controversy hinges on the ability and desire of Boom writers to transcend a petty bourgeois liberal consciousness.

24. See Rama, "El boom en perspectiva," p. 270.

25. According to Rama, "The heteroclite completion of *Octaedro* by Cortazar or the faulty completion of *El libro de Manuel,* not very typical of his *oeuvre,* seem to respond to the demand of the period. And these demands, to be sure, are not merely economic as one might infer from the terms we use in describing the workings of the market, but rather may respond to multiple pressures: to be present in determined places, to respond to political problems, to participate in circumstantial struggles. "El boom en perspectiva," p. 275.

26. René Avilez Fabila, "Como escribir una novela y convertirla en un bestseller," *Mundo nuevo,* 41–42 (Oct. 1970).

27. "A squirming mass or tetterdemalion humanity emerges in these pages. There are Amazonian river people and Amazonian women. There are missionary nuns, lawless speculators in raw jungle rubber, Indian tribesmen who use blowguns and pilots on river boats in the amphibious world. . . . you get everything: the agony of a woman in childbirth, the brutalities of Indian torture, moments of intoxicated joy, a fatal game of Russian roulette, a provincial wedding. The catering is magnificent; every regional dish is served and savored . . . it is electrically alive." From a *New York Times* book review of Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Green House* (New York: Bard Books, 1973), reprinted on the back cover.

28. "Language reconstructs itself elsewhere under the teeming flux of every kind of linguistic pleasure. Where is this elsewhere. In the paradise of words. *Cobra* is in fact a paradisiac text, utopian (without site), a heterology by plenitude," in Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1975), p. 8. See also Hélène Cixous,

"'Ocobrabaroco.' A Text-Twister," *Review* (1974), p. 26. Both texts are quoted in Franco, "The Crisis of the Liberal Imagination," pp. 18–19.

29. Sara Castro Klaren and Hector Campos, "Tradduciones, tirajes, ventas y estrellas: el 'Boom,'" *Ideologies and Literature* 4, no. 17 (Sept.–Oct. 1983), quote from an interview with Fuentes in which the interviewer insists that the European tradition is more evident than its "American roots" because the Mexican author's novel is concerned with "topics that until now we have considered to belong to us, such as war, fascism and concentration camps" (p. 320).

30. Klaren and Campos, "Tradduciones," p. 327.

31. See Hector Libertella, *Nueva escritura en Latinoamerica* (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1977) and Emir Rodriquez Monegal, *El Boom de la novela latinoamericana* (Caracas: Tiempo Nuevo, 1972).

32. Angel Rama, *Novisimos narradores hispanoamericanos en Marchas: 1964/1980* (Mexico: Marcha Editores, 1981), p. 43.

33. For a comprehensive analysis of the "dictator novels," see Angel Rama, *Los dictadores latinoamericanos* (Mexico: FCE, 1976); Domingo Miliani, "El Dictador: objecto narrativo en *Yo el Supremo,*" *Revista de Critica Literaria Latinoamericana* 4 (1976): 103–19 and "El dictador: objecto narrativo en *El recurso del metodo,*" *Revista Iberoamericana* 114–15 (Jan.–June 1981): 189–225; Carlos Pacheco, *Narrativa de la dictadura y critica literaria* (Caracas: Celarg, 1983).

34. Jean Franco, "The Critique of the Pyramid and Mexican Narrative after 1968," in *Latin American Fiction Today* (Takoma Park, Md.: Hispamérica, 1979), p. 79.

35. Thomas Carlyle, "Dr. Francia," in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays,* vol. 29 (New York: Scribner's, n.d.), p. 273.

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Kwame Anthony Appiah

Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?

Tu t'appelais Bimbircokak
Et tout était bien ainsi
Tu es denvenu Victor-Emile-Louis-Henri-Joseph
Ce qui
Autant qu'il m'en souvienne
Ne rappelle point ta parenté avec
Roqueffelère

Yambo Ouologuem, "A Mon Mari"

In 1987, the Center for African Art in New York organized a show entitled "Perspectives: Angles on African Art." The curator, Susan Vogel, had worked with a number of "cocurators," whom I list in order of their appearance in the table of contents of the exhibition catalogue: Ekpo Eyo, quondam director of the department of antiquities of the National Museum of Nigeria; William Rubin, director of the department of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art and organizer of its controversial exhibit, "Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art"; Romare Bearden, African-American painter; Ivan Karp, curator of African ethnology at the Smithsonian; Nancy Graves, European-American painter, sculptor, and filmmaker; James Baldwin, who surely needs no qualifying glosses; David Rockefeller, art collector and friend of the mighty; Lela Kouakou, Baule artist and diviner from the Ivory Coast (this a delicious juxtaposition, richest and poorest, side by side); Iba N'Diaye, Senegalese sculptor; and Robert Farris Thompson, Yale professor and African and African-American art historian.[1] In her introductory essay, Vogel describes the process of selection used to pick artworks for the show. The one woman and nine men were each offered a hundred-odd photographs of "African art as varied in type and origin, and as high in quality, as we could manage" and asked to select ten for the show. Or, I should say more exactly, this is what was offered to eight of the men. For Vogel adds that "in the case of the Baule artist, a man familiar only with the art of his own people, only Baule objects were placed in the pool of photographs" (*P*, p. 11). At this point we are directed to a footnote to the essay, which reads:

> Showing him the same assortment of photos the others saw would have been interesting, but confusing in terms of the reactions we sought here. Field aesthetics studies, my own and others, have shown that African informants will criticize sculptures from other ethnic groups in terms of their own traditional criteria, often assuming that such works are simply inept carvings of their own aesthetic tradition. [*P*, p. 17 n. 2]

I shall return to this irresistible footnote in a moment. But let me pause to quote further, this time from the words of David Rockefeller, who would surely never "criticize sculptures from other ethnic groups in terms of [his] own traditional criteria," discussing what the catalogue calls a "Fanti female figure":

> I own somewhat similar things to this, and I have always liked them. This is a rather more sophisticated version than the ones that I've seen, and I thought it was quite beautiful. . . . the total composition has a very contemporary, very Western look to it. It's the kind of thing, I think, that goes very well with . . . contemporary Western things. It would look very good in a modern apartment or house. [*P*, p. 138]

We may suppose that Rockefeller was delighted to discover that his final judgment was consistent with the intentions of the sculpture's creators. For a footnote to the earlier checklist—the list of artworks ultimately chosen for the show—reveals that the Baltimore Museum of Art desires to "make public the fact that the authenticity of the Fante figure in its collection has been challenged." Indeed, work by Doran Ross suggests this object is almost certainly a modern piece produced in my hometown of Kumasi by the workshop of a certain Francis Akwasi, which "specializes in carvings for the international market in the style of traditional sculpture. Many of its works are now in museums throughout the West, and were published as authentic by Cole and Ross" (yes, the same Doran Ross) in their classic catalogue, *The Arts of Ghana* (*P*, p. 29).

But then it is hard to be *sure* what would please a man who gives as his reason for picking another piece, this time a Senufo helmet mask, "I have to say that I picked this because I own it. It was given to me by President Houphouet Boigny of the Ivory Coast" (*P*, p. 143); or who remarks "concerning the market in African art":

> the best pieces are going for very high prices. Generally speaking, the less good pieces in terms of quality are not going up in price. And that's a fine reason for picking the good ones rather than the bad. They have a way of becoming more valuable.
>
> I look at African art as objects I find would be appealing to use in a home or an office. . . . I don't think it goes with everything, necessarily—although the very best perhaps does. But I think it goes well with contemporary architecture. [*P*, p. 131]

There is something breathtakingly unpretentious in Rockefeller's easy movement between considerations of finance, aesthetics, and decor. In these re-

sponses, we have surely a microcosm of the site of the African in contemporary—which is, then, surely to say, postmodern—America.

I have quoted so much from Rockefeller not to emphasize the familiar fact that questions of what we call "aesthetic" value are crucially bound up with market value, nor even to draw attention to the fact that this is known by those who play the art market. Rather I want to keep clearly before us the fact that David Rockefeller is permitted to say *anything at all* about the arts of Africa because he is a *buyer* and because he is at the *center,* while Lela Kouakou, who merely makes art and who dwells at the margins, is a poor African whose words count only as parts of the commodification[2]—both for those of us who constitute the museum public and for collectors, like Rockefeller—of Baule art.[3] I want to remind you, in short, of how important it is that African art is a *commodity.*

But the cocurator whose choice will set us on our way is James Baldwin, the only cocurator who picked a piece that was not in the mold of the Africa of "Primitivism." The sculpture that will be my touchstone is a Yoruba piece that carries the museum label, *Man with a Bicycle* (fig. 1). Here is some of what Baldwin said about it:

> This is something. This has got to be contemporary. He's really going to town! It's very jaunty, very authoritative. His errand might prove to be impossible. . . . He is challenging something—or something has challenged him. He's grounded in immediate reality by the bicycle. . . . He's apparently a very proud and silent man. He's dressed sort of polyglot. Nothing looks like it fits him too well. [*P,* p. 125]

Baldwin's reading of this piece is, of course and inevitably, "in terms of [his] own . . . criteria," a reaction contextualized only by the knowledge that bicycles are new in Africa and that this piece, anyway, does not look anything like the works he recalls seeing from his earliest childhood at the Schomburg Museum in Harlem. His response torpedoes Vogel's argument for her notion that the only "authentically traditional" African—the only one whose responses, as she says, could have been found a century ago—must be refused a choice among Africa's art cultures because he—unlike the rest of the cocurators, who are Americans and the European-educated Africans—will use his "own . . . criteria." The message is that this Baule diviner, this authentically African villager, does not know what *we,* authentic postmodernists, now know: that the first and last mistake is to judge the Other on one's own terms. And so, in the name of this relativist insight, we impose our judgment: that Lela Kouakou may not judge sculpture from beyond the Baule culture zone, because he, like all the other African "informants" we have met in the field, will read them as if they were meant to meet those Baule standards.

Worse than this, it is nonsense to explain Kouakou's responses as deriving from an ignorance of other traditions—if indeed he is, as he no doubt is supposed to be, like most "traditional" artists today, if he is, for example, like Francis Akwasi of Kumasi. Kouakou may judge other artists by his own standards (what on earth else could he, could anyone, do save make no judgment at all?), but to suppose that he is unaware that there are other standards within

Man with a Bicycle, Yoruba, Nigeria, twentieth century, wood and paint 35 3/4 in. The Newark Museum, Newark, N.J. Reproduced by permission of The Newark Museum/Art Resource, N.Y.

Africa (let alone without) is to ignore a piece of absolutely basic cultural knowledge, common to most precolonial as well as to most colonial and post-colonial cultures on the continent: the piece of cultural knowledge that explains why the people we now call "Baule" exist at all. To be Baule, for example, is, for a Baule, not to be a white person, not to be Senufo, not to be French.[4]

But Baldwin's *Man with a Bicycle* does more than give the lie to Vogel's strange footnote; it provides us with an image that can serve as a point of entry to my theme, a piece of contemporary African art that will allow us to explore the articulation of the postcolonial and the postmodern. *Man with a Bicycle* is described as follows in the exhibition catalogue:

> Man with a Bicycle
> Yoruba, Nigeria 20th century
> Wood and paint H. 35 3/4 in.
> The Newark Museum
>
> The influence of the Western world is revealed in the clothes and bicycle of this neo-traditional Yoruba sculpture which probably represents a merchant en route to market. [*P*, p. 23]

It is this word *neotraditional*—a word that is almost right—that provides, I think, the fundamental clue.

But I do not know how to explain this clue without first saying how I keep my bearings in the shark-infested waters around the semantic island of the postmodern. The task of chasing the word *postmodernism* through the pages of Jean-François Lyotard and Fredric Jameson and Jürgen Habermas, in and out of the *Village Voice* and the *TLS* and even the *New York Times Book*

Review is certainly exhausting. Yet there *is,* I think, a story to tell about all these stories—or, of course, I should say, there are many, but this, for the moment, is mine—and, as I tell it, the Yoruba bicyclist will eventually come back into view.

I do not (this will come as no surprise) have a definition of the postmodern to put in the place of Jameson's or Lyotard's, but there is now a rough consensus about the structure of the modern/postmodern dichotomy in the many domains—from architecture to poetry to philosophy to rock music to the movies—in which it has been invoked. In each of these domains there is an antecedent practice that laid claim to a certain exclusivity of insight, and in each of them "postmodernism" is a name for the rejection of that claim to exclusivity, a rejection that is almost always more playful, though not necessarily less serious, than the practice it aims to replace. That this will not do as a *definition* of postmodernism follows from the fact that in each domain this rejection of exclusivity assumes a particular shape, one that reflects the specificities of its setting. To understand the various postmodernisms this way is to leave open the question of how their theories of contemporary social, cultural, and economic life relate to the actual practices that constitute that life—to leave open, then, the relations between postmodern*ism* and postmodern*ity.*[5]

It is an important question *why* this distancing of the ancestors should have become so central a feature of our cultural lives. The answer surely has to do with the sense in which art is increasingly commodified. To sell oneself and one's products as art in the marketplace, one must, above all, clear a space in which one is distinguished from other producers and products—and one does this by the construction and the marking of differences. To create a market for bottled waters, for example, it was necessary, first, to establish that subtle (even untastable) differences in mineral content and source of carbonation were essential modes of distinction.

It is this need for distinctions in the market that accounts for a certain intensification of the long-standing individualism of post-Renaissance art production: in the age of mechanical reproduction, aesthetic individualism, the characterization of the artwork as belonging to the oeuvre of an individual, and the absorption of the artist's life into the conception of the work can be seen precisely as modes of identifying objects for the market. The sculptor of the man with a bicycle, by contrast, will not be known by those who buy this object; his individual life will make no difference to the future history of his sculpture. (Indeed, he surely knows this, in the sense in which one knows anything whose negation one has never even considered.) Nevertheless, there is *some*thing about the object that serves to establish it for the market: the availability of Yoruba culture and of stories about Yoruba culture to surround the object and distinguish it from "folk art" from elsewhere.

Postmodern culture is the culture in which all postmodernisms operate, sometimes in synergy, sometimes in competition; and because contemporary culture is, in a certain sense to which I shall return, transnational, postmodern culture is global—though that emphatically does not mean that it is the culture of every person in the world.

If postmodernism is the project of transcending some species of modernism, which is to say some relatively self-conscious, self-privileging project of a privileged modernity, our *neotraditional* sculptor of *Man with a Bicycle* is presumably to be understood, by contrast, as premodern, that is, traditional. (I am supposing, then, that being neotraditional is a way of being traditional; what work the *neo*- does is matter for a later moment.) And the sociological and anthropological narratives of tradition through which he or she came to be so theorized is dominated, of course, by Max Weber.

Weber's characterization of traditional (and charismatic) authority *in opposition* to rational authority is in keeping with his general characterization of modernity as the rationalization of the world; and he insisted on the significance of this characteristically Western process for the rest of humankind:

> A product of modern European civilization, studying any problem of universal history, is bound to ask himself to what combination of circumstances the fact should be attributed that in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having *universal* significance and value.[6]

Now there is certainly no doubt that Western modernity now has a universal *geographical* significance. The Yoruba bicyclist—like Sting and his Amerindian chieftains of the Amazon rain forest or Paul Simon and the Mbaqanga musicians of *Graceland*—is testimony to that. But, if I may borrow someone else's borrowing, the fact is that the Empire of Signs strikes back. Weber's "as we like to think" reflects his doubts about whether the Western *imperium* over the world was as clearly of universal *value* as it was certainly of universal *significance;* and postmodernism fully endorses his resistance to this claim. The man with a bicycle enters our museums to be valued by us (Rockefeller tells us *how* it is to be valued), but just as the *presence* of the object reminds us of this fact, its *content* reminds us that the trade is two-way.

I want to argue that to understand our—our human—modernity, we must first understand why the rationalization of the world can no longer be seen as the tendency either of the West or of history, why, simply put, the modernist characterization of modernity must be challenged. To understand our world is to reject Weber's claim for the rationality of what he called rationalization and his projection of its inevitability; it is, then, to have a radically post-Weberian conception of modernity.

T. S. Eliot abhors the soullessness and the secularization of modern society, the reach of Enlightenment rationalism into the whole world. He shares Weber's account of modernity and more straightforwardly deplores it. Le Corbusier favors rationalization—a house is a "machine for living in"—but he, too, shares Weber's vision of modernity. And, of course, the great rationalists—the believers in a transhistorical reason triumphing in the world—from Kant on, are the source of Weber's Kantian vision. Modernism in literature, architecture, and philosophy—the account of modernity that, on my model, *post*modernism in these domains seeks to subvert—may be for reason or

against it, but in each domain rationalization, the pervasion of reason, is seen as the distinctive dynamic of contemporary history.

But the beginning of postmodern wisdom is to ask whether Weberian rationalization is in fact what has occurred historically. For Weber, charismatic authority—the authority of Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Che Guevara, Kwame Nkrumah—is antirational, yet modernity has been dominated by just such charisma. Secularization hardly seems to be proceeding: religions grow in all parts of the world; more than ninety percent of North Americans still avow some sort of theism; what we call "fundamentalism" is as alive in the West as it is in Africa and the Middle and Far Easts; Jimmy Swaggart and Billy Graham have business in Louisiana and California as well as in Costa Rica and Ghana.

What we can see in all these cases, I think, is not the triumph of Enlightenment Reason—which would have entailed exactly the end of charisma and the universalization of the secular—not even the penetration of a narrower instrumental reason into all spheres of life, but what Weber mistook for that: namely, the incorporation of all areas of the world and all areas of even formerly "private" life into the money economy. Even in domains like religion where instrumental reason would recognize that the market has at best an ambiguous place, modernity has turned every element of the real into a sign, and the sign reads "for sale."

If Weberian talk of the triumph of instrumental reason can now be seen to be a mistake, the disenchantment of the world, that is, the penetration of a scientific vision of things, describes at most the tiny—and in the United States quite marginal—world of the higher academy and a few islands of its influence. What we have seen in recent times in the United States is not secularization—the end of religions—but their commodification; and with that commodification religions have reached further and grown—their markets have expanded—rather than died.

Postmodernism can be seen, then, as a retheorization of the proliferation of distinctions that reflects the underlying dynamic of cultural modernity, the need to clear oneself a space. Modernism saw the economization of the world as the triumph of reason; postmodernism rejects that claim, allowing in the realm of theory the same proliferation of distinctions that modernity had begun.

That, then, is how I believe the issue looks from here. But how does it look from the postcolonial spaces inhabited by *Man with a Bicycle*?

I SHALL SPEAK ABOUT Africa, with confidence both that some of what I have to say will work elsewhere in the so-called Third World and that it will not work at all in some places. And I shall speak first about the producers of these so-called neotraditional artworks and then about the case of the African novel, because I believe that to focus exclusively on the novel (as theorists of contemporary African cultures have been inclined to do) is to distort the cultural situation and the significance of postcoloniality within it.

I do not know when *Man with a Bicycle* was made or by whom; African art has, until recently, been collected as the property of "ethnic" groups, not of individuals and workshops, so it is not unusual that not one of the pieces in the "Perspectives" show was identified in the checklist by the name of an individual

artist, even though many of them are twentieth-century works. (And no one will be surprised, by contrast, that most of them *are* kindly labeled with the names of the people who own the largely private collections where they now live.) As a result I cannot say if the piece is literally postcolonial, produced after Nigerian independence in 1960. But the piece belongs to a genre that has certainly been produced since then: the genre that is here called *neotraditional.* Simply put, what is distinctive about this genre is that it is produced for the West.

I should qualify. Of course, many of the buyers of first instance live in Africa; many of them are juridically citizens of African states. But African bourgeois consumers of neotraditional art are educated in the Western style, and, if they want African art, they would often rather have a "genuinely" traditional piece, by which I mean a piece that they believe to be made precolonially, or at least in a style and by methods that were already established precolonially. These buyers are a minority. Most of this art—*traditional* because it uses actual or supposed precolonial techniques but *neo*- (this, for what it is worth, is the explanation I promised earlier) because it has elements that are recognizably colonial or postcolonial in reference—has been made for Western tourists and other collectors.

The incorporation of these works in the West's museum culture and its art market has almost nothing, of course, to do with postmodernism. By and large, the ideology through which they are incorporated is modernist: it is the ideology that brought something called "Bali" to Antonin Artaud, something called "Africa" to Pablo Picasso, and something called "Japan" to Roland Barthes. (This incorporation as an official Other was criticized, of course, from its beginnings: hence Oscar Wilde's observation that "the whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people.")[7] What *is* postmodernist is Vogel's muddled conviction that African art should not be judged "in terms of [someone else's] traditional criteria." For modernism, primitive art was to be judged by putatively *universal* aesthetic criteria, and by these standards it was finally found possible to value it. The sculptors and painters who found it possible were largely seeking an Archimedean point outside their own cultures for a critique of a Weberian modernity. For *post*-modernisms, by contrast, these works, however they are to be understood, cannot be seen as legitimated by culture- and history-transcending standards.

The *neotraditional* object is useful as a model, despite its marginality in most African lives, because its incorporation in the museum world (as opposed to the many objects made by the same hands that live peacefully in nonbourgeois homes: stools, for example) reminds one that in Africa, by contrast, the distinction between high culture and mass culture, insofar as it makes sense at all, corresponds, by and large, to the distinction between those with and those without Western-style formal education as cultural consumers.

The fact that the distinction is to be made this way—in most of sub-Saharan Africa, excluding the Republic of South Africa—means that the opposition between high culture and mass culture is available only in domains where there is a significant body of Western formal training. This excludes (in most places) the plastic arts and music. There are distinctions of genre and audience in African music, and for various cultural purposes there is some-

thing we call "traditional" music that we still practice and value; but village and urban dwellers alike, bourgeois and nonbourgeois, listen, through discs and, more important, on the radio, to reggae, to Michael Jackson, and to King Sonny Adé.

And this means that, by and large, the domain in which such a distinction makes the most sense is the one domain where that distinction is powerful and pervasive: namely, in African writing in Western languages. So that it is here that we find, I think, a place for consideration of the question of the *post*coloniality of contemporary African culture.

Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a *comprador* intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa.

All aspects of contemporary African cultural life—including music and some sculpture and painting, even some writings with which the West is largely not familiar—have been influenced, often powerfully, by the transition of African societies *through* colonialism, but they are not all in the relevant sense *post*colonial. For the *post-* in postcolonial, like the *post-* in postmodern, is the *post-* of the space-clearing gesture I characterized earlier, and many areas of contemporary African cultural life—what has come to be theorized as popular culture, in particular—are not in this way concerned with transcending, with going beyond, coloniality. Indeed, it might be said to be a mark of popular culture that its borrowings from international cultural forms are remarkably insensitive to, not so much dismissive of as blind to, the issue of neocolonialism or "cultural imperialism." This does not mean that theories of postmodernism are irrelevant to these forms of culture, for the internationalization of the market and the commodification of artworks are both central to them. But it *does* mean that these artworks are not understood by their producers or their consumers in terms of a postmodern*ism:* there is no antecedent practice whose claim to exclusivity of vision is rejected through these artworks. What is called "syncretism" here is a consequence of the international exchange of commodities, but not of a space-clearing gesture.

Postcolonial intellectuals in Africa, by contrast, are almost entirely dependent for their support on two institutions: the African university, an institution whose intellectual life is overwhelmingly constituted as Western, and the Euro-American publisher and reader. Even when these writers seek to escape the West—as Ngugi wa Thiong'o did in attempting to construct a Kikuyu peasant drama—their theories of their situation are irreducibly informed by their Euro-American formation. Ngugi's conception of the writer's potential in politics is essentially that of the avant-garde, of left modernism.

Now this double dependence on the university and the European publisher means that the first generation of modern African novels—the generation of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir*—

were written in the context of notions of politics and culture dominant in the French and British university and publishing worlds in the 1950s and 1960s. This does not mean that they were like novels written in Western Europe at that time, for part of what was held to be obvious both by these writers and by the high culture of Europe of the day was that new literatures in new nations should be anticolonial and nationalist. In one respect, these early novels seem to belong to the world of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary nationalism; they are theorized as the imaginative recreation of a common cultural past that is crafted into a shared tradition by the writer. They are in the tradition of Sir Walter Scott, whose *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was intended, as he said in the introduction, to "contribute somewhat to the history of my native country; the peculiar features of whose manners and character are daily melting and dissolving into those of her sister and ally."[8] The novels of this first stage are thus realist legitimations of nationalism: they authorize a "return to traditions" while at the same time recognizing the demands of a Weberian rationalized modernity.

From the later sixties on, such celebratory novels become rare.[9] For example, Achebe moves from the creation of a usable past in *Things Fall Apart* to a cynical indictment of politics in the modern sphere in *A Man of the People.* But I would like to focus on a francophone novel of the later sixties, a novel that thematizes in an extremely powerful way many of the questions I have been asking about art and modernity: I mean, of course, Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence.* This novel, like many of the second stage of which it is a part, represents a challenge to the novels of the first stage: it identifies the realist novel as part of the tactic of nationalist legitimation and so it is—if I may begin a catalogue of its ways-of-being-*post*-this-and-that—*postrealist.*

Now postmodernism is, of course, postrealist also. But Ouologuem's postrealism is motivated quite differently from that of such postmodern writers as, say, Thomas Pynchon. Realism naturalizes: the originary "African novel," such as Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Laye's *L'Enfant noir,* is "realist." Therefore, Ouologuem is against it; he rejects, indeed assaults, the conventions of realism. He seeks to delegitimate the forms of the realist African novel, in part, surely, because what it sought to naturalize was a nationalism that, by 1968, had plainly failed. The national bourgeoisie that took the baton of rationalization, industrialization, and bureaucratization in the name of nationalism, turned out to be a kleptocracy. Their enthusiasm for nativism was a rationalization of their urge to keep the national bourgeoisies of other nations, and particularly the powerful industrialized nations, out of their way. As Jonathan Ngate has observed, the world of *Le Devoir de violence* is one "in which *the efficacy* of the call to the Ancestors as well as the Ancestors themselves is seriously called into question."[10] That the novel is in this way postrealist allows its author to borrow, when he needs them, the techniques of modernism, which, as we learned from Jameson, are often also the techniques of postmodernism. It is helpful to remember at this point how Ouologuem is described on the back of the Éditions du Seuil first edition:

> Né en 1940 au Mali. Admissible à l'École normale supérieure. Licencié ès Lettres. Licencié en Philosophie. Diplômé d'Études supérieures d'Anglais. Prépare une thèse de doctorat de Sociologie.[11]

Borrowing from European modernism is hardly going to be difficult for someone so qualified. To be a Normalien is indeed, in Christopher Miller's charming formulation, "roughly equivalent to being baptized by Bossuet."[12]

Miller's discussion of *Le Devoir de violence* in *Blank Darkness* focuses usefully on theoretical questions of intertextuality raised by the novel's persistent massaging of one text after another into the surface of its own body. Ouologuem's book contains, for example, a translation of a passage from Graham Greene's 1934 novel *It's a Battlefield* (translated and improved, according to some readers!) and borrowings from Guy de Maupassant's *Boule de Suif* (hardly an unfamiliar work to francophone readers; if this latter is a theft, it is the adventurous theft of the kleptomaniac, who dares us to catch him at it). The book's first sentence artfully establishes the oral mode, by then an inevitable convention of African narration, with words that Ngate rightly describes as having the "concision and the striking beauty and power of a proverb" (*FAF,* p. 64), and mocks us in this moment because the sentence echoes the beginning of André Schwarz-Bart's decidedly un-African 1959 Holocaust novel, *Le Dernier des justes,* an echo that more substantial later borrowings confirm.[13]

> *Nos yeux* boivent l'éclat du soleil, et, vaincus, s'étonnent de pleurer. *Maschallah! oua bismillah!* . . . Un récit de l'aventure sanglante de la négraille—honte aux hommes de rien!—*tiendrait aisément dans* la première moitié de ce *siècle; mais la véritable histoire* des Nègres commence beaucoup, beaucoup plus *tôt,* avec les Saïfs, en l'an 1202 de notre ère, dans l'Empire africain de Nakem. [*D*, p. 9]

> *Nos yeux* reçoivent la lumière d'étoiles mortes. Une biographie de mon ami Ernie *tiendrait aisément dans* le deuxième quart du XX^e^ *siècle; mais la véritable histoire* d'Ernie Lévy commence très *tôt,* . . . dans la vieille cité anglicane de York. Plus précisément: le 11 mars 1185.[14]

The reader who is properly prepared will expect an African holocaust. These echoes are surely meant to render ironic the status of the rulers of Nakem as descendants of Abraham El Héït, "le Juif noir" (*D*, p. 12).

The book begins, then, with a sick joke against nativism at the unwary reader's expense. And the assault on realism is—here is my second signpost—postnativist; this book is a murderous antidote to a nostalgia for *Roots.* As Wole Soyinka has said in a justly well-respected reading, "the Bible, the Koran, the historic solemnity of the griot are reduced to the histrionics of wanton boys masquerading as humans."[15] It is tempting to read the attack on history here as a repudiation not of roots but of Islam, as Soyinka does when he goes on to say:

> A culture which has claimed indigenous antiquity in such parts of Africa as have submitted to its undeniable attractions is confidently proven to be imperialist; worse, it is demonstrated to be essentially hostile and negative to the indigenous culture. . . . Ouologuem pronounces the Moslem incursion into black

> Africa to be corrupt, vicious, decadent, elitist and insensitive. At the least such a work functions as a wide swab in the deck-clearing operation for the commencement of racial retrieval.[16]

But it seems to me much clearer to read the repudiation as a repudiation of national history, to see the text as postcolonially postnationalist as well as anti- (and thus, of course, post-) nativist. Indeed, Soyinka's reading here seems to be driven by his own equally representative tendency to read Africa as race and place into everything.[17]

Raymond Spartacus Kassoumi—who is, if anyone is, the hero of this novel—is, after all, a son of the soil, but his political prospects by the end of the narrative are less than uplifting. More than this, the novel explicitly thematizes, in the anthropologist Shrobenius (an obvious echo of the name of the German Africanist Leo Frobenius, whose work is cited by Léopold Senghor) the mechanism by which the new elite has come to invent its traditions through the "science" of ethnography:

> Saïf fabula et l'interprète traduisit, Madoubo répéta en français, raffinant les subtilités qui faisaient le bonheur de Shrobénius, écrevisse humaine frappée de la manie tâtonnante de vouloir ressusciter, sous couleur d'autonomie culturelle, un univers africain qui ne correspondait à plus rien de vivant; . . . il voulait trouver un sens métaphysique à tout. . . . Il considérait que la vie africaine était art pur [*D*, p. 102]

> Saif made up stories and the interpreter translated, Madoubo repeated in French, refining on the subtleties to the delight of Shrobenius, that human crayfish afflicted with a groping mania for resuscitating an African universe—cultural autonomy, he called it—which had lost all living reality; . . . he was determined to find metaphysical meaning in everything . . . African life, he held, was pure art.[18]

At the start we had been told that "there are few written accounts, and the versions of the elders diverge from those of the griots, which differ in turn from those of the chroniclers" (*BV,* p. 6). Now we are warned off the supposedly scientific discourse of the ethnographers.[19]

Because *Le Devoir de violence* is a novel that seeks to delegitimate not only the form of realism but the content of nationalism, it will to that extent seem to us, misleadingly, postmodern: misleadingly, because what we have here is not postmodern*ism* but postmodern*ization;* not an aesthetics but a politics, in the most literal sense of the term. After colonialism, the modernizers said, comes rationality; that is the possibility the novel rules out. Ouologuem's novel is typical of novels of this second stage in that it is not written by someone who is comfortable with and accepted by the new elite, the national bourgeoisie. Far from being a celebration of the nation, then, the novels of the second, postcolonial, stage are novels of delegitimation: they reject not only the Western *imperium* but also the nationalist project of the postcolonial national bourgeoisie. And, so it seems to me, the basis for that project of delegitimation cannot be the postmodernist one: rather, it is grounded in an appeal to an ethical universal. Indeed it is based, as intellectual responses to oppression in

Africa largely are based, in an appeal to a certain simple respect for human suffering, a fundamental revolt against the endless misery of the last thirty years. Ouologuem is hardly likely to make common cause with a relativism that might allow that the horrifying new-old Africa of exploitation is to be understood, legitimated, in its own local terms.

Africa's postcolonial novelists, novelists anxious to escape neocolonialism, are no longer committed to the nation; in this they will seem, as I have suggested, misleadingly postmodern. But what they have chosen instead of the nation is not an older traditionalism but Africa—the continent and its people. This is clear enough, I think, in *Le Devoir de violence.* At the end of the novel Ouologuem writes:

> Souvent il est vrai, l'âme veut rêver l'écho sans passé du bonheur. Mais, jeté dans le monde, l'on peut s'empêcher de songer que Saïf, pleuré trois millions de fois, renaît sans cesse a l'Histoire, sous les cendres chaudes de plus de trente Républiques africaines. [*D*, p. 207]

> Often, it is true, the soul desires to dream the echo of happiness, an echo that has no past. But projected into the world, one cannot help recalling that Saif, mourned three million times, is forever reborn to history beneath the hot ashes of more than thirty African republics. [*BV,* pp. 181–82]

If we are to identify with anyone, it is with "la négraille," the niggertrash, who have no nationality. For them one republic is as good (which is to say as bad) as any other. Postcoloniality has become, I think, a condition of pessimism.

Postrealist writing, postnativist politics, a *transnational* rather than a *national* solidarity—and pessimism: a kind of *post*optimism to balance the earlier enthusiasm for Ahmadou Kourouma's *Suns of Independence.* Postcoloniality is *after* all this: and its *post-,* like that of postmodernism, is also a *post-* that challenges earlier legitimating narratives. And it challenges them in the name of the suffering victims of "more than thirty African republics."

If there is a lesson in the broad shape of this circulation of cultures, it is surely that we are all already contaminated by each other, that there is no longer a fully autochthonous *echt-*African culture awaiting salvage by our artists (just as there is, of course, no American culture without African roots). And there is a clear sense in some postcolonial writing that the postulation of a unitary Africa over against a monolithic West—the binarism of Self and Other—is the last of the shibboleths of the modernizers that we must learn to live without.

In *Le Devoir de violence,* in Ouologuem's withering critique of "Shrobéniusologie," there were already the beginnings of this postcolonial critique of what we might call "alteritism," the construction and celebration of oneself as Other: "voilà l'art nègre baptisé 'esthétique' et marchandé—oye!—dans l'univers imaginaire des 'échanges vivifiants'!" (*D*, p. 110) ["henceforth Negro art was baptized 'aesthetic' and hawked in the imaginary universe of 'vitalizing exchanges'" (*BV,* p. 94)]. After describing the fantasmatic elaboration of some interpretative mumbo jumbo "invented by Saïf," Ouologuem then announces that "l'art nègre se forgeait ses lettres de noblesse au folklore de la spiritualité

mercantiliste, oye oye oye" (*D*, p. 110) ["Negro art found its patent of nobility in the folklore of mercantile intellectualism, *oye, oye, oye*" (*BV,* p. 94)]. Shrobenius, the anthropologist, as apologist for "his" people; a European audience that laps up this exoticized Other; African traders and producers of African art, who understand the necessity to maintain the "mysteries" that construct their product as "exotic"; traditional and contemporary elites, who require a sentimentalized past to authorize their present power: all are exposed in their complex and multiple mutual complicities.

> "témoin: la splendeur de son art—, la grandeur des empires du Moyen Age constituait le visage vrai de l'Afrique, sage, belle, riche, ordonnée, non violente et puissante tout autant qu'humaniste—berceau même de la civilisation égyptienne."
>
> Salivant ainsi, Shrobénius, de retour au bercail, en tira un double profit: d'une part, il mystifia son pays, qui, enchanté, le jucha sur une haute chair sorbonicale, et, d'autre part, il exploita la sentimentalité négrillarde—par trop heureuse de s'entendre dire par un Blanc que "l'Afrique était ventre du monde et berceau de civilisation."
>
> La négraille offrit par tonnes, conséquemment et gratis, masques et trésors artistiques aux acolytes de la "shrobéniusologie." [*D*, p. 111]

> "witness the splendor of its art—the true face of Africa is the grandiose empires of the Middle Ages, a society marked by wisdom, beauty, prosperity, order, nonviolence, and humanism, and it is here that we must seek the true cradle of Egyptian civilization."
>
> Thus drooling, Shrobenius derived a twofold benefit on his return home: on the one hand, he mystified the people of his own country who in their enthusiasm raised him to a lofty Sorbonnical chair, while on the other hand he exploited the sentimentality of the coons, only too pleased to hear from the mouth of a white man that Africa was "the womb of the world and the cradle of civilization."
>
> In consequence the niggertrash donated masks and art treasures by the ton to the acolytes of "Shrobeniusology." [*BV,* pp. 94–95]

A little later, Ouologuem articulates more precisely the interconnections of Africanist mystifications with tourism and the production, packaging, and marketing of African artworks.

> Une école africaniste ainsi accrochée aux nues du symbolisme magico-religieux, cosmologique et mythique, était née: tant et si bien que durant trois ans, des hommes—et quels hommes!: des fantoches, des aventuriers, des apprentis banquiers, des politiciens, des voyageurs, des conspirateurs, des chercheurs—"scientifiques," dit-on, en vérité sentinelles asservies, montant la garde devant le monument "shrobéniusologique" du pseudo-symbolisme nègre, accoururent au Nakem.
>
> Déjà, l'acquisition des masques anciens était devenue problématique depuis que Shrobénius et les missionnaires connurent le bonheur d'en acquérir en quantité. Saïf donc—et la pratique est courante de nos jours encore—fit en-

> terrer des quintaux de masques hâtivement executés à la ressemblance des originaux, les engloutissant dans des mares, marais, étangs, marécages, lacs, limons—quitte à les exhumer quelque temps après, les vendant aux curieux et profanes à prix d'or. Ils étaient, ces masques, vieux de trois ans, *chargés,* disait-on, *du poids de quatre siècles de civilisation.* [*D*, p. 112]
>
> An Africanist school harnessed to the vapors of magico-religious, cosmological, and mythical symbolism had been born: with the result that for three years men flocked to Nakem—and what men!—middlemen, adventurers, apprentice bankers, politicians, salesmen, conspirators—supposedly "scientists," but in reality enslaved sentries mounting guard before the "Shrobeniusological" monument of Negro pseudosymbolism.
>
> Already it had become more than difficult to procure old masks, for Shrobenius and the missionaries had had the good fortune to snap them all up. And so Saif—and the practice is still current—had slapdash copies buried by the hundredweight, or sunk into ponds, lakes, marshes, and mud holes, to be exhumed later on and sold at exorbitant prices to unsuspecting curio hunters. These three-year-old masks were said to be *charged with the weight of four centuries of civilization.* [*BV,* pp. 95–96]

Ouologuem here forcefully exposes the connections we saw earlier in some of Rockefeller's insights into the international system of art exchange, the international art world: we see the way in which an ideology of disinterested aesthetic value—the "baptism" of "Negro art" as "aesthetic"—meshes with the international commodification of African expressive culture, a commodification that requires, by the logic of the space-clearing gesture, the manufacture of Otherness. (It is a significant bonus that it also harmonizes with the interior decor of contemporary apartments.) Shrobenius, "ce marchand-confectionneur d'idéologie," the ethnographer allied with Saif—image of the "traditional" African ruling caste—has invented an Africa that is a body over against Europe, the juridical institution; and Ouologuem is urging us vigorously to refuse to be thus Other.

Sara Suleri has written recently, in *Meatless Days,* of being treated as an "otherness machine"—and of being heartily sick of it.[20] Perhaps the predicament of the postcolonial intellectual is simply that *as* intellectuals—a category instituted in black Africa by colonialism—we are, indeed, always at the risk of becoming otherness machines, with the manufacture of alterity as our principal role. Our only distinction in the world of texts to which we are latecomers is that we can mediate it to our fellows. This is especially true when postcolonial meets postmodern; for what the postmodern reader seems to demand of Africa is all too close to what modernism—in the form of the post-impressionists—demanded of it. The role that Africa, like the rest of the Third World, plays for Euro-American postmodernism—like its better-documented significance for modernist art—must be distinguished from the role postmodernism might play in the Third World; what that might be it is,

I think, too early to tell. What happens will happen not because we pronounce on the matter in theory, but will happen out of the changing everyday practices of African cultural life.

For all the while, in Africa's cultures, there are those who will not see themselves as Other. Despite the overwhelming reality of economic decline; despite unimaginable poverty; despite wars, malnutrition, disease, and political instability, African cultural productivity grows apace: popular literatures, oral narrative and poetry, dance, drama, music, and visual art all thrive. The contemporary cultural production of many African societies, and the many traditions whose evidences so vigorously remain, is an antidote to the dark vision of the postcolonial novelist.

And I am grateful to James Baldwin for his introduction to the *Man with a Bicycle,* a figure who is, as Baldwin so rightly saw, polyglot—speaking Yoruba and English, probably some Hausa and a little French for his trips to Cotonou or Cameroon, someone whose "clothes do not fit him too well." He and the other men and women among whom he mostly lives suggest to me that the place to look for hope is not just to the postcolonial novel, which has struggled to achieve the insights of Ouologuem or Mudimbe, but to the all-consuming vision of this less-anxious creativity. It matters little whom the work was made *for;* what we should learn from is the imagination that produced it. *Man with a Bicycle* is produced by someone who does not care that the bicycle is the white man's invention: it is not there to be Other to the Yoruba Self; it is there because someone cared for its solidity; it is there because it will take us further than our feet will take us; it is there because machines are now as African as novelists . . . and as fabricated as the kingdom of Nakem.[21]

Notes

1. *Perspectives: Angles on African Art* (exhibition catalogue, Center for African Art, New York, 1987), p. 9; hereafter abbreviated *P.*

2. I should insist now, the first time that I use this word, that I do not share the widespread negative evaluation of commodification; its merits, I believe, must be assessed case by case. Certainly critics such as Kobena Mercer (for example, in his "Black Hair/Style Politics," *New Formations* 3 [Winter 1987]: 33–54) have persuasively criticized any reflexive rejection of the commodity form, which so often reinstates the hoary humanist opposition between the "authentic" and the "commercial." Mercer explores the avenues by which marginalized groups have manipulated commodified artifacts in culturally novel and expressive ways.

3. Once Vogel has thus refused Kouakou a voice, it is less surprising that his comments turn out to be composite also. On closer inspection, it turns out that there is no single Lela Kouakou who was interviewed like the other cocurators. Kouakou is, in the end, quite exactly an invention, thus literalizing the sense in which "we," and more particularly "our" artists, are individuals while "they," and "theirs," are ethnic types.

4. It is absolutely crucial that Vogel does not draw her line according to racial or national categories: the Nigerian, the Senegalese, and the African-American cocurators are each allowed to be on "our" side of the great divide. The issue here is something less obvious than racism.

5. Where the practice is theory—literary or philosophical—postmodernism as a

theory of postmodernity can be adequate only if it reflects to some extent the realities of that practice, because the practice itself is fully theoretical. But when a postmodernism addresses, say, advertising or poetry, it may be adequate as an account of them even if it conflicts with their own narratives, their theories of themselves. For, unlike philosophy and literary theory, advertising and poetry are not largely *constituted* by their articulated theories of themselves.

6. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* trans. Talcott Parsons (London, 1930), p. 13.

7. Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying: An Observation," *Intentions* (London, 1909), p. 45.

8. Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads* (London, 1883), pp. 51–52.

9. Somewhat along these lines, Neil Lazarus's *Resistance in Postcolonial African Fiction* (New Haven, Conn., 1990), pp. 1–26, offers a useful periodization of African fiction in relation to the "great expectations" of the independence era and the "mourning after."

10. Jonathan Ngate, *Francophone African Fiction: Reading a Literary Tradition* (Trenton, N.J., 1988), p. 59; hereafter abbreviated *FAF.*

11. Yambo Ouologuem, *Le Devoir de violence* (Paris, 1968), back cover; hereafter abbreviated *D.*

12. Christopher Miller, *Blank Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French* (Chicago, 1985), p. 218.

13. Ngate's focus on this initial sentence follows Aliko Songolo, "The Writer, the Audience and the Critic's Responsibility: The Case of *Bound to Violence,*" in *Artist and Audience: African Literature as a Shared Experience,* ed. Richard O. Priebe and Thomas Hale (Washington, D.C., 1979); cited in *FAF,* p. 64.

14. For this comparison I have made my own translations, which are as literal as possible: "*Our eyes* drink the flash of the sun, and, conquered, surprise themselves by weeping. Maschallah! oua bismillah! . . . An account of the bloody adventure of the niggertrash—dishonor to the men of nothing—*could easily begin in the* first half of this *century; but true history of* the Blacks begins very much *earlier,* with the Saifs, in the year 1202 of our era, in the African kingdom of Nakem" (*D*, p. 9; my emphasis). "*Our eyes* receive the light of dead stars. A biography of my friend Ernie *could easily begin in the* second quarter of the 20th *century; but the true history* of Ernie Lévy begins much *earlier,* . . . in the old Anglican city of York. More precisely: on the 11 March 1185" (André Schwarz-Bart, *Le Dernier des justes* [Paris, 1959], p. 11, my emphasis).

15. Wole Soyinka, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 100.

16. Ibid., p. 105.

17. I have discussed this matter in "Soyinka and the Philosophy of Culture," in *Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives,* ed. P.O. Bodunrin (Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 1985), pp. 250–63.

18. Ouologuem, *Bound to Violence,* trans. Ralph Manheim (London, 1968), p. 87; hereafter abbreviated *BV.*

19. Here we have the literary thematization of the Foucauldian theory proposed by V. Y. Mudimbe in his important recent intervention, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, Ind., 1988).

20. Sara Suleri, *Meatless Days* (Chicago, 1989), p. 105.

21. I learned a good deal from trying out earlier versions of these ideas at an NEH Summer Institute on "The Future of the Avant-Garde in Postmodern Culture," under

the direction of Susan Suleiman and Alice Jardine at Harvard in July 1989; at the African Studies Association (under the sponsorship of the Society for African Philosophy in North America) in November 1989, where Jonathan Ngate's response was particularly helpful; and, as the guest of Ali Mazrui, at the Braudel Center at SUNY-Binghamton in May 1990. As usual, I wish I knew how to incorporate more of the ideas of the discussants on those occasions.

41

Kumkum Sangari

The Politics of the Possible

The nonmimetic narrative modes of Gabriel García Márquez and Salman Rushdie inhabit a social and conceptual space in which the problems of ascertaining meaning assume a political dimension qualitatively *different* from the current postmodern scepticism about meaning in Europe and America. Yet such nonmimetic modes, emerging from countries that have been subject to colonial regimes, also seem to lay themselves open to the academized procedures of a peculiarly Euro-American, historically singular, postmodern epistemology that universalizes the self-conscious dissolution of the bourgeois subject, with its now characteristic stance of self-irony, across both space and time. The expansive forms of the modern and the postmodern novel appear to stand in ever polite readiness to recycle and accommodate other cultural content, whether Latin American or Indian. The ease with which a reader may be persuaded to traverse the path between such nonmimetic modes and postmodernism—broadly defined here as the specific preoccupations and "sensibility" of both contemporary fiction and of poststructuralist critical discourse—may well lead us to believe they were indeed made for each other. There is not much to be gained by surveying the literature on the subject or in quibbling with individual readings, since the question here is obviously much larger than the "misreading" of any single writer. The question concerns the way writings from the "third world" (a term that both signifies and blurs the functioning of an economic, political, and imaginary geography able to unite vast and vastly differentiated areas of the world into a single "underdeveloped" terrain) are consumed in the "west" (a term produced to opposite effect by the same procedures). My intention here is to examine the politics of this conjuncture by locating those aspects of their narratives that provide, or at least seem to provide, a *mode of access* for the at once diverse and homogeneous discourse of poststructuralism, and which enable their habilitation as texts of a near canonical Euro-American postmodernism.

I

García Márquez's marvelous realism is a mode of perception grounded in the political and historical formation not merely of Colombia but of Latin America. Not only is the inscription of the marvelous in the real produced by the colonial history and cultural heterogeneity of Latin America—but the disjunctures in the *understanding* of the real are also equally mediated by and

refracted through the apparatus of various kinds of domination, colonial and neocolonial, underwritten by feudal survivals and reactive nationalisms.

The cultural heterogeneity of Latin America is at once different from and determined by the "linear" history of Euro-America, which both nests inside and shapes Latin American history, often by erasure. The simultaneity of the heterogeneous is a matter of historical sedimentation that results from the physical coexistence over time of different ethnic groups (native American–Indian, Arab, African, Indochinese, Asian, Spanish), each laden with its respective cultural freight of language, myth, oral narrative, magic, superstition, Roman Catholicism, Cartesian education and modern rationalism. Simultaneity is the restless product of a long history of miscegenation, assimilation and syncretization *as well as* of conflict, contradiction and cultural violence. It is also the unique history of colonization by the Spanish colonizer who, now as cutural hybrid, faces across a time-lag the changed configuration of those social forces that once produced the conquistadores. Although a hybrid social formation has an unusual and resistant retentiveness, it would be a mistake to read this as simply the inert absence of change, succession, and continuity. The piecemeal assimilation of European (and American) culture is difficult either to reject or to homogenize: first, because in a contradictory way it is both something that is *owned* as well as something to be *resisted,* and second, because of an "uneven" material development that, contrary to the unidirectional laws of "progress," enforces the coexistence of primitive agriculture with advanced technology and export economies.

In a complex way Latin American history *secretes* the history of Europe and in turn renders it ironic. García Márquez's intent is obvious when he points out in his Nobel Lecture that "the statue of General Francisco Morazan [1792–1842, the last president of the Central American Federation] erected in the main square of Tegucigalpa is actually one of Marshall Ney [1769–1815, one of Napoleon's commanders], purchased at a Paris warehouse of secondhand sculptures."[1] It is thus a history that forbids (or ought to) either a simple relation to or a linear interpretation of the past and that insistently raises the question of *how* it is to be known. If the Latin American coastline saw the simultaneous influx of black African slaves and Swedish, Dutch and English pirates, then surely it is more than merely symbolic for the patriarch to see from his window the ships of Christopher Columbus and the ships of the U.S. Marines anchored simultaneously in his harbor. Within this context it is not surprising that García Márquez does not set up the real and the marvelous as antithetical realms.[2] He neither construes himself as the "other" nor indulges in a simple-minded rejection of rationalism: he refuses to consent unthinkingly to parallel and essentialist categories such as primitive and modern, tribal and rational. For García Márquez, "even the most seemingly arbitrary creation has its rules. You can throw away the fig leaf of rationalism only if you don't descend into chaos and irrationality."[3] So in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* the "sainthood" of the dictator's mother is rationally exposed as fraud, shown to be a lucrative part of several illusions imposed on him even as other "miracles" are instated as "real," for instance, the dictator's secret knowledge of a salt that

can cure lepers and make cripples walk. The *margin* for arbitrariness, the casting up of the strange, the incongruous, the peripheral, is the *product* of a historical situation. At this level marvelous realism embodies a *specific* social relation. The apparent "novelty" of marvelous realism results from its immersion in a social matrix wherein improvisation is not merely a formal literary reflex but a function of living in the world.

Finally, the cultural simultaneity of Latin America must be distinguished from the cultural synchronicity available in the so-called first world. In Latin America it is a matter of historical conjuncture in which different modes of production, different social formations, and different ways of seeing overlap as the ground of conflict, contradiction, change, and intervention, both local and foreign. Not only is Big Mama an emblematic figure in this respect—her power is described in "Big Mama's Funeral" as being at once seignorial, manorial, papal, electoral, *and* mercantile (she runs a financial empire)—but the "feudal" forms and practices implanted by Spanish colonialism are shown to be reappropriated by emerging power structures. Thus the cruelest killer in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* is José Ignacio Saenz de la Barra, the last scion of aristocracy and a sort of medieval prince of darkness.[4]

In contrast, the synchronic time of the modern and of the postmodern in Euro-America is an *end* product of the now discredited linear time of modernity and progress. The synchronic vision of culture in Euro-America takes shape through the conglomerative modality of collage as "different times and different spaces are combined in a here and now that is everywhere at once."[5] Synchronicity, as it inhabits dominant institutions and discourses, is the joint apogee of a cultural modernism and a consumer culture, the instant availability effect of the spatialization of the museum and of the push-button archive, as well as a matter of the recurring renovation of style through new juxtapositions. It must, of course, be said that the cultural heterogeneity produced in Europe and America through internal class stratification, ethnic difference and immigration also has both an oppositional and vulnerable relation to the influential apparatus and dominant discourses of "high" culture.

The double disjunction of a hybrid simultaneity and of the economic and ideological deformations of neocolonialism is the condition within which the real is perceived and also the condition within which both authors and texts are produced. Consequently, the problems of meaning and representation that beset the countries that were colonized are very different from the slippage of meaning and of the "real" which currently confronts the *academic* discourses of Europe and America. To say this is not to claim the possibility of arriving at some essential indigenous truth by a more tortuous route, but to insist that the epistemological problem is *itself* a historical one. Both meaning and the need for locating meaning are conjunctural; and it is useful to maintain a distinction between the realized difficulty of knowing and the preasserted or a priori difficulty of knowing. And if we agree, then surely the problem of meaning for imperialized formations is also at bottom entangled in the problems of social and political aspiration and radical reconstitution whereas the tenuousness of meaning in much Euro-American cultural production, equally a product of this historical conjuncture, is one in which the felt absence of the

will or the ability to change things as they are can become the voice of epistemological despair. For many of us, the difficulty of arriving at “fact” through the historical and political distortions that so powerfully shape and mediate it leads not to dismember finally either the status or the existence of fact. Rather, it tends to assert another *level* of factuality, to cast and resolve issues of meaning on another, more dialectical plane, a plane on which a notion of knowledge as provisional and of truth as historically circumsribed is not only *necessary* for understanding, but can in turn be made to *work* from positions of engagement within the local and contemporary. For me, this is the precise function of García Márquez’s marvelous realism as a cognitive mode.

II

García Márquez’s marvelous realism not only emerges from the contingent, simultaneous, polyphonic contours of his material world, it is also a transformative mode that has the capacity both to register and to engage critically with the present and to generate a new way of seeing. Though he digs beneath the rational encrustations of colonialism to uncover ways of storytelling that existed before or that have subcutaneously survived, he avoids that familiar ideological bind, the swing from disillusionment with an inadequate rationalism to an easily available mysticism—in some sense mutually constitutive categories brought into play by colonialism. Marvelous realism answers an emergent society’s need for renewed self-description and radical assessment, displaces the established categories through which a succession of Europeans and Americans construed other cultures either in their own image or as alterity, questions the capitalist myth of modernization and progress, and asserts without nostalgia a localized preindustrial realm of possibility. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the “almost” two-hundred-year-old Francisco the Man sings the news in songs he has composed, “accompanying himself with the same archaic accordian that Sir Walter Raleigh had given him in the Guianas.” In these songs he “told in great detail the things that had happened in the towns along his route . . . so that if anyone had a message to send or an event to make public, he would pay him two cents to include it in his repertory.”[6] In fact it becomes impossible to idealize a folk culture which on examination proves not only to be crafted from the contingent but to be hybrid as well!

As a mode, marvelous realism is attached to a real *and* to a possible. The seamless quality of this mode, the difficulty of distinguishing between fact and invention, brings an enormous pressure to bear upon the perception of reality. For example, do the incipient rebels in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* actually slice up and dine on the cooked corpse of their comrade? Are two thousand children really kidnapped and massacred because they have discovered how the general rigs the lottery so that he can win every time? The unanswerability of the questions throws them onto another plane.[7] If the real is historically structured to make invisible the foreign locus of power, if the real may thus be other than what is generally visible, if official versions are just as visible and visibly “real” as unofficial versions, and if even the *potentially* real is a *compound* of the desired and the undesirable, then marvelous realism tackles the problem of truth at a level that reinvents a more acute and comprehensive mode of

referentiality. The brutality of the *real* is equally the brutality and terror of that which is *immanent,* conceivable, potentially possible.[8] Besides, if the furthest reaches of imaginary construction alone can equal the heinous deformations of the real, then marvelous realism must exceed mimetic reflection in order to become an interrogative mode that can press upon the real at the point of maximum contradiction. The difficulty of fixing meaning itself is located as a part of social transactions and of ideologies. In this sense the difficulty of distinguishing between fact and fiction becomes a *political* difficulty that bears upon the ethical difficulty of functioning as "real" human beings.

Marvelous realism discovers a figurative discourse that produces a knowledge inseparable from its performance in language, image, and metaphor and that can be understood in its total configuration but not necessarily explained. Through it García Márquez legitimizes the status of the possible as valid knowledge. He realigns a notion of history as a set of discoverable facts with a notion of history as a field of diverse human and cultural possibility. His narratives figure a dynamic relation of past to future in which the present is seen in terms of its potential and in which the varied creative abilities of his culture are embodied in the very capaciousness of the narrative itself. The act of perception is relative yet historically determined; indeed, reality is alterable *only because* it is both relative and determined. The recognition of such relativity is precisely the recognition that the world is open to change: it is necessary to prevent a foreclosure by a single meaning so that different meanings may become possible.

There is nothing purely formal in García Márquez's choice of mode. In one sense the performative aspect of the style lies outside the text in already existing ways of seeing[9] and relies not on the shock of novelty but on shared structures of knowledge and belief. Even in its most "excessive" moments the intent of the style is neither to surprise nor to draw attention to its own uniqueness (as in most Euro-American modernist fiction), but to convey the *shared* social bases of an extraordinary or singular effect.[10] Thus metaphor is treated literally: torrential tropical rain is a downpour that lasts for several years, old age and physical decay are manifest as green slime on the teeth, Colonel Buendia's distance from reality is a white chalk circle demarcating ten feet of space around him, Amaranta Ursula leads her devoted husband into Macondo "by a silk rope tied around his neck." Metaphor is turned into *event* precisely so that it will *not* be read *as* event, but folded back into metaphor as disturbing, resonant image. This is a technique that can make palpable a whole range of natural and social phenomena, and can mime the operative modalities or political effectiveness of an ideology without recourse to the mimetic mechanics of "exposure." A good example of the "naturalization" of an "unnatural" relation as well as of the necessary *re*-presentation of the already known is the collection of the sea by the Americans (not in repayment but as "surety for the interest" on unpayable debt), which is then neatly parceled and transported to Arizona. The perverse fertility of the dictator who allows this to happen—manifested in the algae and lichen, sea flowers and sea animals that grow on his body—ostends the barrenness of the seabed. And yet I must add that the literalization of metaphor is neither an arbitrary trick nor a ho-

mogenizing device but capable of fine discriminations. The obliterated banana company workers who vanish with no trace and are declared never to have existed are the exact opposite of the nude saint, Remedios the Beauty, who ascends to heaven along with the sheets hung out to dry—just as the protean Mr. Brown of the banana company is the opposite of Melquiades with his many lives. Different kinds of gullibility and "magic" are at work here: the first kind signifies the official (and in this case alien) extinction of human value; the second represents some of the local exigencies of survival.

III

García Márquez's narratives direct attention to the *social, collective, performative,* and *manifold processes* by which *meaning* is *generated,* to *parole* instead of *langue.* Unlike Euro-American postmodern fiction, which directs attention to the abstract processes whereby meaning is either generated but never found or is lost in the finding (for example, Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*), the self-conscious textuality in García Márquez's narratives is grounded in an "overplus" of meaning, a barely controlled semantic richness. The conscious technical complexity of the texts does not ask to be read as an effect either of the autonomy of language, or text, or even as a gesture toward the auto-referentiality of art. Rather, the narratives gesture toward the *autonomy* of the *story* in its *semantic* aspect: stories exist above and beyond the storytellers who relate them, the language in which they are told, and the narrative structures in which they are held; stories are as protean as the people who tell and retell them, remember and forget them, repeat or improvise them. Stories are as malleable as human history. García Márquez's fiction is not encumbered by the myth of the originality either of the author or of the narrative. Stories exist inside a continuous social space within which they can be remodeled and recombined. Little stories drop from long narratives to become full-fledged tales, or full-fledged tales are compressed into cameos and reinserted into long narratives.

García Márquez's marvelous realism, then, is an interactive mode based on a notion of collectivity (a social relation *and* a political desire) which the narratives *figure* forth in several ways. The storyteller *and* the stories have a shared existence in a social matrix that is always prior to their telling. Though the narrative voices change, neither these voices nor the voice of the narrator is highly individuated in the bourgeois sense of being authored/authorized by a singular subjectivity or a single perspective. *The Autumn of the Patriarch* enacts the polyglot dialogue of different social voices in a hybrid, power-riven culture. There is a polyphony of voices—the dictator, his mother, soldiers, commanders, soothsayers, many nameless women and men—which are to be deciphered at the dialogic and representative level, not at the level of individual motivation or internal psychological consistency. The long sentence in *Autumn* contains "multiple monologues"[11] that shift between first, second, and third person, singular and plural speech, that both address and answer. A single sentence (like Spanish as a language) may incorporate, though never proportionately, the socially disparate voices of both oppressor and oppressed. In the episode of the general and the beauty from the dogfight district, the

two voices are meshed, they *make* each other's separate reality. The interactive narration replicates the way in which people construct and are mutually constructed by their social relations. It also allows for a comparative standpoint which gives free "permission to narrate" from a number of places within the narrative rather than privileging any one place. No place in the narrative is exempt from scrutiny.[12] The narrative is "open" in the sense that it creates a figurative space for "interventions on the part of those represented."[13] However, this method also *controls* the generation of meaning without pre-empting it; by providing multiple voices within the narrative, it *fixes* the social locus of the production of meaning. This heterogeneity constitutes the particular mode of the text's orientation toward the listener/reader—a heterogeneity that telescopes but does not set out to efface the contradictions between contending social voices.

The function of the long sentence in *Autumn* is not to achieve a higher degree of individualization and formal sophistication but to pile up stories, all part of the same story told by different voices. Each sentence is a story or even a series of stories: the sentence cannot stop because all the stories are *connected.* In Henry James's fiction syntactical elaboration is an endorsement of uncertainty and a site for the formation of an aristocratic bourgeois consciousness. In Joseph Conrad's fiction, syntactical complexity gestures toward an ineffable universe wherein mystery begins to underwrite and overdetermine imperial history. In William Faulkner's fiction, the long sentence becomes a sign of the incestuous involution of the American South and simulates the relentless claustrophobia of oppression that leaves no space to breathe or time to punctuate and is impossible to stem or stop. The style of *Autumn* is closest to Faulkner; however, the ideological locus of the long sentence is finally different from all these writers. The long sentence is an index of the *fecundity* of the repressed, of the barely begun and unfinished—*not uncertain*—stories simmering beneath the strident sounds and tight enclosures of dictatorship, and so gestures toward unopened possibilities. From within the loops and whorls of narrative bursts the recognition that the stories people tell will never finish, will strain and break through the controlling constraints of grammar. The speech of many unnamed storytellers gels, coheres, contradicts, overlaps, and is retold. The long sentence shows that heteroglossia—the genuine plurality of unmerged and independent voices—is not an achievement, but a continuing struggle between contending social forces that, like the sentence, has no "natural" culmination. The sentences accumulate into a narrative that displays the collective, digressive quality of an oral narrative, which invokes the submerged life of a ravaged people and marks their glimpsed resilience. Within a hybrid culture like Latin America (unlike sealed tribal formations) the traffic between oral forms and written forms is not necessarily one-way. Though subject to the mediation of colonial and class relations, the written too finds its *way back* into orality;[14] since the written and the oral are both interdependent and improvisatory, neither is simply at one with itself. Together they *begin* to describe a field within which "values are not reified but volatile"[15] and have to be returned to the whole business of living.

Further, collectivity is infused at the level of the *subject* itself, in the "I,"

just as it is infused in the single sentence. Individuality is a truly connective definition—that which connects the subject to a social matrix—so that it is the richness of contextualization that *sets off* the notation of personal particularity and differentiates the individual, rather than the social collectivity itself, as being subject to the unique perception of a bourgeois individual. The solitary ageless dictator is a "composite character,"[16] the sum of several Latin American dictators, as well as an infinitely divisible character, held together by his function. The complexity of the dictator is the complexity of his contradictory social construction (as agent and pawn, protector and destroyer) and revealed interaction rather than of an "internalized" individuality wherein the full connection between private and public then needs to be wrested from the "unconscious" or from other "concealed" realms. This composite and divisible mode of characterization is able to show the individual shapes of tyranny and to represent dictatorship itself as a complicit social institution, diffused throughout the social fabric, both supported from within the country and propped up from without.

The ideological space García Márquez's texts occupy is composed of a series of openings and closings. Causality is complex; the narratives are composed simultaneously at many levels and literally held together by repetition and retelling. The narratives return to fixed points again and again from different directions. Repetition is the mnemonic glue that binds the stories as well as that which allows the stories a point from which to depart in a *different* direction. It both preempts surprise and encodes a desire to totalize, to resist fragmentation and to structure the new through the familiar,[17] and it builds upon the notion of improvisation wherein each performance is at once exceptional and obedient to a given structure; each performance can be repeated, yet no two performances are identical, for each is always open to the transformations of a particular context. Thus repetition is the ground of both the *new* and the *same.* The stillness of repetition, even in an early piece like "Leaf Storm," is not just a sign of fatalism and despair.[18] At one level, the style pulls out onto the surface and lays bare—in conjuncture rather than in essence—the fatalistic way in which events are perceived and enacted in the consciousness of the town folk. At another level, the same memory that enables the closures of repetition also proves to be the agent of historical sense and of political understanding, that is, it provides the openings. In *One Hundred Years* José Arcadio Secundo's persistent memory is the only record that remains of the banana company massacre; the plague of insomnia which leads to collective loss of memory is equivalent to the loss of a usable past, of a historiography, indeed of historical agency.[19] So Pilar Ternera reads the past in the cards. Memory functions as flexible, collective, material practice open to improvisation and personal reminiscence (but not dependent on it) and is different from the kind of memory which is central to the modernism of T. S. Eliot and of Marcel Proust. For them memory becomes the often conservative, always individuated, organizing principle of poems and narratives designed to cope with cultural fragmentation, to authorize singular visions (which ironically intensify the experience of fragmentation), to preserve a "monumental civilization" as "heritage" through quotation, and to relive it through nostalgia.

Collectivity in-forms the thematic and structural preoccupation with the enigma or the unsolved puzzle in García Márquez's narratives. What is problematized is not meaning "itself," but the recovery of meaning in specific contexts. The emphasis is on why, in a particular situation, an unequivocal answer cannot be found. The lampoons of *In Evil Hour* reveal what everybody knows, the familiar becomes unfamiliar and takes on the character of a revelation, but the authorship of the lampoons remains a mystery. The priest says that the lampoons are a "terrorism of the moral order"; Cassandra the soothsayer finds out that they are written by everybody and nobody; Judge Arcadio, the self-styled detective, knows that the clues are so varied that it cannot be individuals or even a conspiracy; the mayor simply uses the opportunity to reimpose a fascist rule on the town. The lampoons (like the subversive leaflets) are an efflorescence of the submerged life of the town—what is known has to be continually brought to the surface and reunderstood.

The Chronicle of a Death Foretold is also structured as an unsolved enigma: the whole town is shown trying to understand *why* Santiago Nasar is murdered *after* the virtual complicity of the entire town in not preventing the murder has been previously established. People gather in strange surrender to witness a murder that has been announced; though the murderers wish to be prevented, even the priest does not stop them. Guilt is collective. The town wants to understand its own role and responsibility in the matter: "None of us could go on living without an exact knowledge of the place and mission assigned to us by fate."[20] And even as people claim to understand the motive for the murder—honor in a male chauvinist society which requires brides to be virgins—the murder obviously remains senseless. The narration, with its attentive, "factual" rendering of many voices by a single narrator, and its scrupulous reconstruction of the movements of both the victims and the killers, consciously attempts to compensate for its own inadequacy. The inability of the narrator or of the town *finally* to understand becomes in this case equivalent to the townspeople's inability to change. The unsolved enigma, at this level, is not an index of an indeterminable reality, but the failure, in historical terms, of the will of a people.

At another level, the text exploits, for local ends, the colonial notion of the enigmatic "native" (for instance, the mysterious Arab or the inscrutable Chinese). The enigmatic native is a familiar orientalizing trope that encodes, first, the incapacity of most colonizers to apprehend the "native" save as alterity, and second, the reserve, resistance, interested information, or secrecy that colonizers repeatedly encountered and that probably indicated both a recalcitrance and a conscious strategy on the part of "natives." The stereotype of the enigma—in its origin, if not its use—is at bottom dialogic. Again, the colonizers' notations of the enigmatic "other" were systematically accompanied by vigorous attempts (by missionaries, anthropologists, ethnographers, and adminstrators)[21] to penetrate into the substratum of truth and of material resources. So the political, institutional and discursive links between the female (the powerless and the colonized), chastity (the hitherto unconquered and unknown), enigma (the impenetrable object of scrutiny) and colonization are deep historical ones. The very form of *Chronicle of a Death* is *gendered:*

structured as female, the form becomes a critique of the content (the subjection of women to the violating codes of a chauvinist society), and functions to protect the already violated woman from further violation or further surveillance. The question of whether Santiago Nasar is guilty and, if not, then who deflowered Angela Vicario ("raised to suffer") remains unanswered. The unanswered question is not an invitation to further guesswork, but addresses itself to whether the question itself is worth asking or is necessary to answer, whether the question itself is not the first in a series of violations of which the murder is a culmination.

At a third level, to maintain the text as enigma is also to maintain a resistance to being construed as an object of scrutiny. The enigma produces strain and anxiety in those who seek to inspect and understand it, it rejects the voyeurism, extractiveness and instrumentality of "sight" as it is shaped by the double determination of capitalism and colonization;[22] it exercises power by sustaining insecurity and by openly refusing to surrender its "meaning." Enigma, as structure, endures by virtue of what it withholds, retains the attention it has caught, and acquires a political stamina. The structure of the unsolved enigma in *Chronicle of a Death* is more than a mode of collectivity: it is crafted both as a *resistant* mode and as an *interrogative* mode, both as an *outer* imposition (the way whole continents may remain subject to dominant ways of seeing and not seeing) and as an *inner* imposition (to maintain oneself as an enigma *for* oneself is to fail in political understanding and social will). Such a structure can convey simultaneously a sense of latent energy and of lethargy: it can bring the pressure of *not knowing* to bear with a certain intensity on the problems of *not doing.* To not see is to abnegate responsibility; not to be seen is to be isolated or to be left to perish, a fate that may not be merely individual but collective. The investigating magistrate, tracing the sequence of events leading to the death of Santiago Nasar (a man whom all were watching but never quite seeing), writes: "*Fatality makes us invisible*" (p. 113).

IV

The preoccupation with circular time and the rejection of linear time in García Márquez's narratives are often read as evidence either of his fatalism or of his primitivism. However, the absence of a single linear time need not be read as the absence of a historical consciousness but rather as the contextual operation of a different kind of historical consciousness. The play of linear time with circular time achieves its cognitive force through marvelous realism's capacity to generate and manage various kinds of alignments, tensions, and discontinuities between sequential and nonsequential time.

García Márquez's critique of the linear time of rationality and progress in *One Hundred Years* is leveled from inside the suspicion, well-founded in the Latin American context, that the development of science and technology within the structures of neocolonialism may guarantee continuous dependence. There is a "marvelous" passage where bananas become the fruit of empiricism and thence the fruit of empire. After eating a bunch of bananas, Mr. Herbert assesses Macondo's potential:

> When he finished the first bunch he asked them to bring him another. Then he took a small case with optical instruments out of the toolbox that he always carried with him. With the suspicious attention of a diamond merchant he examined the banana meticulously, dissecting it with a special scalpel, weighing the pieces on a pharmacist's scale, and calculating its breadth with a gunsmith's calipers. Then he took a series of instruments out of the chest with which he measured the temperature, the level of humidity in the atmosphere, and the intensity of the light . . . but he did not say anything that allowed anyone to guess his intentions. (p. 211)

The talismanic notion of technology as a type of "magic" art or as the required miracle that will bring with it the wonders of prosperity is played off against the equally problematic possibility of an indigenous alternative science which of course does not materialize. Local attempts to construct such a science—the attempts to use magnets to discover gold or to use the daguerreotype to establish the existence of God—are shown to be romantic failed attempts that can, at best, offer only a utopian faith in the possibility of rediscovering, or rather, of remaking one's own reality.

However, the wonders of technology that "dazzle" the inhabitants of Macondo—the "frightful" train that is "like a kitchen dragging a village behind it," the bulbs, the phonographs, and the telephones—are not presented merely as an instance of primitive naïveté, but as a historical irony. Technology does not cross the seas as a mere emblem of "progress," but as a broker of profit that easily represents itself as magical and opportunely insinuates its own calculable properties as miraculous. Christopher Columbus has no qualms about representing his scientific knowledge of the stars as shamanistic power:

> With a solemnity worthy of the adventures in boys' books, he takes advantage of his knowledge of the date of an imminent lunar eclipse. Stranded on the Jamaican coast for eight months, he can no longer persuade the Indians to bring him provisions without his having to pay for them; he then threatens to steal the moon from them, and on the evening of February 29, 1504, he begins to carry out his threat, before the terrified eyes of the caciques. . . . His success is instantaneous.[23]

Cortes's conquest of Mexico is no doubt made easier by his claim that his information comes not from human informers, but from the supernatural realm that communicates with him through a ship's chart and a compass.[24] Mr. Herbert and his captive-balloons (a business "which takes him halfway around the world with excellent profits") belong to this hoary tradition of magical invention and intervention; he gets his comeuppance when the inhabitants of Macondo, working on a different cultural logic of exposure to magic, come to consider his "invention *backward*" after having seen and tried the gypsies' "flying carpets" (p. 211, my emphasis).

Through the expansion of time beyond linearity, García Márquez moves beyond the simplifying oppositions of rational and irrational, and attempts to introduce the notion of time as a structure of values, as in his treatment of death. There are two kinds of death in *One Hundred Years:* first, the horrible

brevity of the massacres of the civil war, colonial rule, and the imperial fruit company; and second, an older, integrated, more acceptable way of dying. The first José Buendia dies slowly, publicly under a chestnut tree. Deaths are expected, accompanied by premonition and warning. Prudencio Aguilar is killed in a duel; and when, after dying, he seeks his assassin for company, the living understand and accommodate him:

> When he finally identified him [Aguilar], startled that the dead also aged, José Arcadio Buendia felt himself shaken by nostalgia. "Prudencio" he exclaimed. "You've come from a long way off." After many years of death the yearning for the living was so intense, the need for company so pressing, so terrifying the nearness of that other death which exists within death, that Prudencio Aguilar had ended up loving his worst enemy. (p. 76)

This older form of death bears remarkable similarities to prebourgeois, medieval forms of dying in Europe described so brilliantly by Philip Aries in his book *In the Hour of Our Death.* The natural and daily presence of the dying and the dead among the living, the popular belief in an intermediate space between death and the definite conclusion of life—in sum, a death that is neither a complete separation nor a total annihilation—is, with the emergence of a secular individual in Europe, replaced by a notion of dying as anxious and privatized and of death as an end, as decomposition, and as stigma. In *One Hundred Years* this prebourgeois (or "marvelous") death functions along an axis of value that it also betokens; not only does it literalize that zone of intensified memory in which the living can still experience the recently dead as almost alive, nearly sensuous beings, but it also comes to signify a collective management of the time of mortality and cannot be taken literally as a gullible inability to distinguish the real from the not-real. The same people who write letters and send verbal messages through Amaranta to their dead, refuse to accept the "resurrection" of a dead actor in a new role in a different film; and when it is explained that cinema is an illusion, they refuse to waste time "to weep over the acted out misfortunes of imaginary beings" (p. 209).

Further, García Márquez attempts to develop a mode that can take cognizance of time as it is experienced. Prophecy, the structural obverse of memory, is not merely a means of self-enclosure within a relentless circularity, but part of a complex notion of causality that takes into account both the perceived concurrence of mythic time within a cultural simultaneity and the felt experience of enclosure within a seemingly deterministic logic. Prophecy, as notation, may be taken to signify the popular perception of events to be one in a series of extra-economic determinations that make up what we call history.

The narratives are obsessed with the quality of time and derive a special intensity from prolonging stagnation, oppression, decay. On a political level, the stagnant time in *One Hundred Years* is imposed by a determining history of colonial and neocolonial exploitation that puts Latin America out-of-date, keeps it in thrall, fixes it in another time. Stagnant time is thus both indigenous *and* alien, in the sense that it is *re*-imposed by the logics of Euro-American domination. Further, since linear time is also embedded in Macondo as the long history of Euro-American intrusions in some form, and so

as its *own* history; there is no such thing as pure or uncontaminated indigenous time. It is significant that the concurrent or circular time of Macondo is not only invaded or interrupted by the gypsies who bring alchemy, but also exists in dialectical relation with the several entries of linear time. Thus the banana company builds a separate enclave within Macondo, fences off circular time in order to exploit it. Linear time is as "impure" and as oppressive as circular time.

Finally, if circular time is a metaphor for historical inevitability, then it is important to notice that it does come to an *end.* Pilar Ternara perceives incest as a cyclic retardation of linear time: "the history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spilling into eternity, were it not for the progressive and irremediable *wearing* of the axle" (p. 365; my emphasis). If circularity wears out, becomes bankrupt like other historical fates, so does linearity. The conclusion of *One Hundred Years* at once images and ironizes a decadent European apocalypticism, described by Vyacheslav Ivanov as a "feeling, at once oppressive and exalting, of being the last in a series."[25] The conclusion is poised in a liminal space and in an in-between time, which, having broken out of the binary opposition between circular and linear, gives a third space and a different time the chance to emerge. Similarly, the end of the dictator's life in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* is described as "the good news that the uncountable time of eternity has come to an end" (p. 206). The end of eternity is the end of *known,* even conceivable time; it comes out on the other side of both the cyclic and the linear. The irrevocability of this end as end insists on a new beginning, but the modalities of the new or clues as to how it will come about are absent.

The power of García Márquez's narratives lies in the insistent pressure of *freedom* as the *absent horizon*—which is neither predictable nor inevitable. The way marvelous realism figures collectivity and takes metaphor to excess indicates a reality that exceeds the space allotted to it by its own history. The excess of meaning bursting out of its present time into an imaginable (or probable) time exerts immense pressure on his narratives. This may be an absent freedom, but it is not an abstract freedom: it is precisely that which is made present and possible by its absence—the lives that people have never lived *because* of the lives they are forced to live or have chosen to live. That which is desired and that which exists, the sense of abundance and the sense of waste, are dialectically related.

V

Salman Rushdie's narratives may employ a comparable nonmimetic mode, but they can neither be bracketed with García Márquez's, nor seen as continuous with postmodernism, and need to be "contextualized" separately. Here I can undertake no more than to sketch in his problematic historical location. If García Márquez creates a subsuming and transformative mode that, drawing on substantive indigenous narrative modes, can also rework and relegate the epistemologies of both realism and modernism, Rushdie's narratives play provocatively with disparate ways of seeing, yet are riven by the strain of double coding for different audiences. Further, drawing on culturally distinct modes,

they are caught between different ideological systems, pressured by different demands. In the attempt to negotiate two terrains Rushdie's narratives confirm and unsettle much on either side.

The diverse, diffuse, and class-divided relationship with "English" culture and the English language, in part the product of a mode of colonization unaccompanied by any large-scale influx of British settlers in India, make Rushdie's insider/outsider position both representative and precarious. For instance, sections of the middle class residing in India can be as "anglicized," "alienated," isolated, or equivocal about their cultural alignments, as can émigrés. In some sense while Rushdie sets out to represent a post-independence, middle-class ethos, his narrative too is shaped by the contradictions inscribed in the formation of this class. The introduction of first realist, then modernist modes under the aegis of colonialism in nineteenth-century India occurred in contradictory combination with insistent, ideologically fraught reconstructions of a precolonial past. These latter were determined as much by the cultural formation of this class and the way it was assembled from heterogenous groups as by the political economy of imperialism, which has since prolonged the moment of "uneven" development long after the end of direct political rule. The notable religious and linguistic diversity of India was and remains subject both to fabricated divisions and to imposed homogeneities in the interests of political control. Rushdie also undertakes an archaeological (and necessarily distanced) excavation of an émigré's past, working from within a contingent modernism that is produced, even imposed, by cultural displacement and compelled to accept its own hybrid character. In his use and remaking of English as an Indian vernacular, as well as in his conscious arrogation of an "international" literary ancestry, he attempts to break from both unconscious influence (the site of more devious cultural insinuation) and a parochial or indigenist nationalism (often tied in binary relation to its chosen adversary "western" modes). His "internationalism" thus can potentially be an incisive restructuring of the possibilities already latent in India's political and social history of complicities, interpenetrations and direct appropriations.

The social formation of the Indian subcontinent, then, is in many ways amenable to Rushdie's fabulous realism. Rushdie draws on extant narrative modes—especially the epic and the folktale. The informality of the epic structure—the scope for interpolation, digression, accretion, in addition to its self-ascribed status as history or *itihaas* (for example, the *Mahabharata*)—has allowed it in the past to represent ideological collectivities as well as to permit the expression of contesting world views. The serial character—that is, stories nesting inside and/or leading to each other—of folktales (for example, the *Panchatantra* or the *Katha Sarit Sagar*) and their ingenuous, improvisatory yet generic, underindividuated "oral" narrators are a significant resource for Rushdie. Further, his fabulation finds a fertile ground not just in classical and oral traditions but also in a still extant social perception of art. This perception does not always constitute the real and the not-real as a binary opposition, but as coexistent; and in it, sacred and secular art forms can be read as miracle or *chamatkar,* signifying not the presence of the miraculous per se but an elasticity and a capacity for wonder on the part of the listener/viewer/reader that can

give the quality of a revelation. As an aesthetic of creativity and response this is quite different from the consciously engineered "surprise" of the unexpected juxtaposition that is central to much Euro-American modernism. Modernism in fact derives its energy from a steady opposition to realism: realism is the implied or habitual mode of perception that has to be countered or subverted.

In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie attempts to play with these two ways of seeing and so, perforce, with two different conceptions of the subject. The form of the narrative has an epic intention; unfinished stories give a sense of unending posssibility; the narrator's choice of story is presented as merely one of several. The totalizing yet open epic structure exists cheek-by-jowl with an epistemological mode (based, like Euro-American modernism, on an acknowledged yet decentered realism) that privileges faulty sight, peripheral or incomplete vision, limited perception, deliberate fallibility, and the splinter effect—in short, with a covertly totalizing quasi-modernist aesthetic of the fragment. To some extent, the narrative finds its dynamic in the modernist challenge to premodern forms and vice-versa.

The narrator, Saleem Sinai, is also split through the center. On the one hand, he is a scribe and storyteller, and his favorite god is Ganesh—not surprising considering Saleem's nose and occupation. His narrative method combines the compendious knowledge of a pundit with a pre-authorized orality: he reads out what is written to the non-literate Padma, as well as writes what he hears, and so attempts to forge a conscious relation between the oral and the written. The narrator and the narration toy with the idea of the writer as expressing a transindividual consciousness. The narrator humbly makes repeated attempts to establish the story as larger than himself. But the narrator and the narration also make different kinds of moves and are imbricated in a different kind of "self"-consciousness. The narrative incorporates the criteria by which the text might be judged, speculates on the narrator's motivation, biographical formation and "role," and ponders the status of fiction vis-à-vis the "real"—displays the characteristic modernist preoccupation with the composition, fictiveness, and self-reflexiveness of narrative.

The conflation of an "oral" narrator with a modernist narrator leads to an interesting parodic result—they send each other up. If Ganesh breeds with Tristram Shandy to hatch Saleem Sinai, then who is the butt of the joke? The ineffectual Shandyesque Saleem, who despite asserted humility makes repeated attempts to establish himself as more important than the story, to present himself as an agent of history, parodies both the historical aggrandizement of the (impotent) individual—the paradigmatic protagonist of nineteenth-century realist fiction—and the vaunted epicality of his own narrative. The often indulgent autoreferentiality of the postmodern idiom is opened up for inspection and irony, especially as the narrative's own substantive alignment is with the specificity of colonial and contemporary experience on the Indian subcontinent. Finally, by wearing its technique on the sleeve, as it were, the narrative is able to display to Indian middle classes the doubleness of their own parentage, the making of their urban habitat, of their popular culture, and of their "despair"—an image of their own peculiar hybrid formation wherein too many things have "leaked" into each other. However, somewhere in this region

where two ways of seeing intersect lies the curious desire of the narrative to confirm both ways of seeing. While the parodic mode works at the expense of both epistemologies, the allegorical mode (albeit problematized and contested), which sets up the narrator as both child and fate of independent India, attempts to conjoin the two. Saleem Sinai is to be at once the voice of the individual and of a collectivity, to be spectator and participant, to be unique and representative.

Such a position is precarious precisely because neither parodic rejection nor large-hearted assimilation is a sufficient confrontation of the formation of Indian middle-class subjects; the axes of their hybridization, both through a history of precolonial syncretism and through colonial transactions, are not identical with the paradigmatic "literary" formation of either a coherent bourgeois self grounded in a realist ontology or a self-fracturing "high" bourgeois subject suffused with alienation. In sum, degrees and forms of embourgeoisement are at issue. For instance, here "alienations" too have a different social genesis and literary-cultural valencies and different political locations. The repetitive, obsessive quality of a fragmented individual consciousness, though grafted on, does not always stick, as in the amnesiac Sunderbans episode where Saleem, in Buddha-like apathy, regresses into an inner landscape. The strain of negotiating the treacherous terrain between two worlds surfaces in the way the Sunderbans episode tropes the journey through the jungle/hell as an outer projection of inner torment, and almost falls into the psychologizing metaphors, which go at least as far back as Conrad, where the darkness within the imperial bourgeois consciousness becomes identical with the fetid darkness of the jungle. Again, the narrative embraces all mythologies in an effort to activate an essentially plural or secular conception of Indianness; it even appears at times to grasp Indianness as if it were an overly abundant torrent of religious, class, and regional diversity, rather than a complex and contradictory articulation, in different historical conjunctures, of caste, class and cultural difference and conflict, "othering" and syncretism, prejudice and political use, that can scarcely be idealized. Through the diversity of its narrative techniques and the diversity it seeks to record, *Midnight's Children* effects something that verges on an indigenized "tropicalization" of the subcontinent.

Rushdie's is a fertile project. It relies on the received or pre-existing transformative capacity of Indian narratives and listeners/readers; but can it be said to be itself transformative, to effect a different mode of understanding, to offer to remake the reader? Running aground on the shoals of parody and allegory, he scarcely uses his freedom as a professed fabulist. The totalizing and meandering potential of his chosen form cohabits uneasily with a modernist epistemology of the fragment, the specific perspectivism of a bourgeois subject. Further, unlike García Márquez, for whom the "arbitrary" is a notation of the loose, recalcitrant residue of a complex, sedimented social formation, for Rushdie, the "arbitrary" is perilously close to becoming a notation of that avid cultural nomadism which invites assimilation into a postmodern marketplace. However, in the ability and attempt to play both with different conceptions of the subject and with different ways of seeing, a play licensed by this historical moment as well as by the (politically and ethically fraught) intersection be-

tween the so-called non-western and the postmodern, his narrative opens the way toward more incisive descriptions of related cultural formation.

VI

What are the modes of access into such non-mimetic fiction for contemporary Euro-American, academic, poststructuralist discourse? In what sense are the openings provided by the fiction itself and in what sense are they constructed by the critical discourse?

As my argument maintains, the hybrid writer is already open to two worlds and is constructed within the national and international, political and cultural systems of colonialism and neocolonialism. To be hybrid is to understand and question as well as to represent the pressure of such historical placement. The hybrid, lived-in simultaneity of Latin America, at once historical, hierarchical and contradictory, is also the ground for political analysis and change. And yet for these same reasons, hybridity as a position is particularly vulnerable to reclassification. The "modern" moments of such non-mimetic fiction emerge in fact from different social formations and express or figure different sets of social relations. Though forged within the insistent specificity of a localized relation, the very differences of such fiction are read as techniques of "novelty" and "surprise" in much Euro-American academic discourse. Novelty guarantees assimilation into the line of postmodern writers not only because the principle of innovation is also the principle of the market in general,[26] but also because the postmodern obsession with anti-mimetic forms is always on the lookout for new modes of "self" fracture, for new versions of the self-locating, self-disrupting text. From this decontextualizing vantage point various formal affinities can easily be abstracted from a different mode of cognition; the non-mimetic can be read as anti-mimetic, difference can easily be made the excuse for sameness. The transformative spaces in a text—that is, those which do not readily give up their meaning—are the crucial node of its depoliticization. The engima in García Márquez's narratives can be read as a radical contextual figure or can be recuperated as yet another self-reflexive instance of the postmodern meaning/representation problematic. The synchronic time-space of postmodernism becomes a modality for collapsing other kinds of time—most notably, the politically charged time of transition. And further, since postmodernism both privileges the present and valorizes indeterminacy as a cognitive mode, it also deflates social contradiction into forms of ambiguity or deferral, instates arbitrary juxtaposition or collage as historical "method," preempts change by fragmenting the ground of praxis.[27]

However, it is difficult to understand postmodernism without at the same time understanding the appropriative history of Euro-American "high" modernism. Raymond Williams points out that modernism is governed by the "unevenness . . . of a class society," and this—along with its mobility and dislocations, which find a home within the "imperial metropolis"—leads to the characteristic experience of "estrangement and exposure."[28] Nonetheless, modernism or more specifically, the dominant and definitionally privileged tendencies within it, also enter into and are governed by another set of rela-

tionships. Modernism is a major act of cultural self-definition, made at a time when colonial territories were being reparceled and emergent nationalisms were beginning to present the early outlines of decolonization. As a cultural ensemble, modernism is assembled, in part, through the internalization of jeopardized geographical territory—which is now incorporated either as "primitive" image/metaphor or as mobile nonlinear structure. Though often intended as a critique, such incorporation often becomes a means for the renovation of bourgeois ideologies, especially with the institutionalization of modernism. Ironically, the "liberating" possibilities of an international, oppositional, and "revolutionary" modernism for many early-twentieth-century writers and artists from the colonies came into being at a time when Euro-American modernism was itself recuperating the cultural products of imperialized countries largely within an aesthetic of the fragment. The modernism they "borrowed" was already deeply implicated in their own history, being based partly on a random appropriation and remodeling of the "liberating" and energizing possibilities of their own local or regional "traditions."[29] Not only have the critical practices which have developed around modernism been central to the development of an assimilative bourgeois consciousness, a powerful absorptive medium for transforming colliding realities into a cosmopolitan, nomadic, and pervasive "sensibility," but the freewheeling appropriations of modernism also coincide with and are dependent on the rigorous documentation, inventory, and reclassification of "third world" cultural products by the museum/library archive.[30] Modernism as it exists is inconceivable without the archive, and the archive as it exists is inconceivable without the political and economic relations of colonization and capitalism.

Modernist problems of knowing and representation continue to inform postmodernism. Though the organizing role of individual perception—which could legitimate perspective—and the cohesive role and concept of "art" have lost their ability to bind the aesthetic of the fragment into a "whole" and are indeed challenged and "unmade" by postmodernism, there are distinct ideological and historical continuities between the two. Not only has the destabilizing of the image that modernism effected now been extended into the prose of postmodern critical theory and refined anew, but a postmodern aesthetic continues to raid the "inarticulate" cultural forms of the "third world," "textualizing" a geographically lost terrain (for example, Roland Barthes's *Empire of Signs*).

Postmodern skepticism is the complex product of a historical conjuncture and is constructed as both symptom and critique of the contemporary economic and social formation of Europe and America. But postmodernism does have a tendency to universalize its epistemological preoccupations—a tendency that appears even in the work of critics of radical political persuasion, and that results, notably, in analytic procedures that reconstitute an overly consolidated, uni-directional "west." On the one hand, the world contracts into the "west"; a Eurocentric perspective (for example, the post-Stalinist, anti-teleological, anti-master narrative dismay of Euro-American Marxism) is brought to bear upon "third world" cultural products; a "specialized" scepticism is carried everywhere as cultural paraphernalia and epistemological ap-

paratus, as a way of seeing; and the postmodern problematic becomes *the* frame through which the cultural products of the rest of the world are seen. On the other hand, the "west" expands into the world; late capitalism muffles the globe and homogenizes (or threatens to) all cultural production[31]—this, for some reason, is one "master narrative" that is seldom dismantled as it needs to be if the political agency and differential economic, class, and cultural formations of imperialized countries within a global economy are to be taken into account. The writing that emerges from this position, however critical it may be of colonial discourses, gloomily disempowers the "nation" as an enabling idea and relocates the impulses for change as everywhere and nowhere. Because it sees the "west" as an engulfing "center," it perpetuates the notion of the "third world" as a residue and as a "periphery" that must eternally palpitate the center. This binary center-periphery perspective is based on a homology between economic and cultural domination (or even on two related conflations—of capitalism with the "west" and of capitalism with cultural production), and like the discursive structure of self and other, cannot but relegate the "third world" to the false position of a permanent yet desired challenge to (or subversion of) a suffocating "western" sovereignty.[32] From there it continues to nourish the self-defining critiques of the "west," conducted in the interest of ongoing disruptions and reformulations of a self-ironizing bourgeois subject. The "third world" so construed is at once infinitely malleable and essentially impermeable.

Such skepticism does not take into account either the fact that the postmodern preoccupation with the crisis of meaning is not everyone's crisis (even in Europe and America) or that there are different modes of de-essentialization which are socially and politically grounded and mediated by separate perspectives, goals, and strategies for change in other countries. Postmodern scepticism dismantles the "unifying" intellectual traditions of Europe—whether liberal humanism or Marxism—but in the process denies to all the truth of or the desire for totalizing narratives. There is no necessary or obvious connection, as is often assumed, between an "international" radicalism and the decentering of unitary discourses (or, of the projects of the Enlightenment and modernity). To believe that a critique of the centered subject and of representation is either equivalent to or sufficient as a critique of colonialism and its accoutrements is in fact to disregard the different historical formation of subjects and ways of seeing that have actually obtained from the conjoint operation of colonization and capitalism; and this belief often leads to a naïve identification of all nonlinear forms with those of the decentered postmodern subject. Further, the crisis of legitimation (of meaning and knowledge systems) becomes a strangely vigorous "master narrative" in its own right, since it sets out to rework or "process" the knowledge systems of the world in its own image; the postmodern "crisis" becomes authoritative because it is inscribed within continuing power relations and because, as an energetic mode of "acquisitive cognition,"[33] it is deeeply implicated in the structure of institutions. Indeed, it threatens to become just as imperious as bourgeois humanism, which was an ideological maneuver based on a series of affirmations, whereas postmodernism appears to be a maneuver based on a series of negations and self-negations through which

a "west" reconstrues its identity as "a play of projections, doublings, idealizations, and rejections of a complex, shifting otherness."[34] Significantly, the disavowal of the objective and instrumental modalities of the social sciences occurs in the academies at a time when *usable* knowledge is gathered with growing certainty and control by Euro-America through advanced technologies of information retrieval from the rest of the world.[35] In a somewhat pontifical diagnosis of the crisis of legitimation and the loss of credibility in the "grand narratives" of emancipation, beginning with the French Revolution and culminating in Marxism, Lyotard concludes that "our role as thinkers is to deepen our understanding of what goes on in language, to critique the vapid idea of information, to reveal an irremediable opacity at the very core of language."[36] To take such postmodern scepticism seriously may well entail stepping outside it in order to examine how, on the one hand, the operations of neocolonialism and globalization (based on such vapid information) continue to be confidently carried out abroad and, on the other hand, "return" as the crisis of meaning/representation/legitimation at home. Postmodernism, like modernism, may well turn out to be, in some respects, another internalization of the international role of Europe and America. If the appropriation and internalization of the unknowability (or undecidability) produced in the contested and contradictory social space of gender, class,[37] and imperial relations in nineteenth-century Euro-America provided both models of the self and grounds for the epistemological and ontological preoccupation of modernism, then perhaps the question of the *present locales* of undecidability is an urgent one.

The history of the so-called west and the history of the "non-west," or, more accurately, the histories of imperialist and imperialized countries, are by now irrevocably different and irrevocably shared. Both have shaped and been shaped by each other in specific and specifiable ways. Linear time or the project of modernity did not simply mummify or overlay the so-called indigenous times of colonized countries, but was itself open to alteration and was reformulated and reentered into discrete political and cultural combinations. Thus the history of Latin America is also the history of Euro-America and informs its psychic and economic itinerary. The cultural projects of *both* the "west" and the "non-west" are implicated in a larger history. If the crisis of meaning in Euro-American academies is seen as the product of a historical conjuncture, then perhaps the refusal either to export it or to import it may be a meaningful gesture, at least until we can replace the stifling monologues of self and other (which, however disordered or decentered, remain the orderly discourses of a bourgeois subject) with a genuinely dialogic and dialectical history that can account for the formation of different selves and the construction of different epistemologies.

Notes

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1. Gabriel García Márquez, 1982 Nobel Lecture, "Latin America's Solitude," *Le Nouvel Observateur* (8 Jan. 1983), p. 60.

2. Irlemar Chiampi Cortez, "In Search of a Latin American Writing," *Diacritics* 8:4 (1978), p. 7.

3. García Márquez, *The Fragrance of Guava,* trans. Ann Wright (London: Verso, 1982), p. 31.

4. "But Saenz de la Barra had made him note that with every six heads sixty enemies are produced and for every sixty six hundred are produced and then six thousand and then six million, the whole country, God damn it, we'll never end, and Saenz de la Barra answered him impassively to rest easy, general, we'll finish with them when they're all finished, what a barbarian." García Márquez, *The Autumn of the Patriarch,* trans. Gregory Rabassa (London: Picador, 1978), p. 162; further citations from this work will be included in the text.

5. Octavio Paz, *Alternating Current,* trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1967), p. 21. Geoffrey Hartman describes the "cultural supermarket": "a liberation not of men and women, but of images, has created a *theatrum mundi* in which the distance between past and present, culture and culture, truth and superstition is suspended by a quasi-divine synchronism." *The Fate of Reading* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 104.

6. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* trans. Gregory Rabassa (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp. 52–53, further citations from this work will be included in the text.

7. During "The Violence" or *La Violencia* in Colombia between 1946 and 1953 certain techniques of torture and death were so common that they were given names; thus *picar para tamal* referred to cutting up a living person into small pieces.

8. In an interview with Gene Bell-Villada, García Márquez discusses the strike sequence in *One Hundred Years:* "That sequence sticks closely to the facts of the United Fruit strike of 1928, which dates from my childhood. . . . The only exaggeration is in the number of dead, though it does fit the proportions of the novel. So instead of hundreds dead, I upped it to thousands. But it's strange, a Colombian journalist the other day alluded in passing to 'the thousands who died in the 1928 strike.' As my Patriarch says: 'It doesn't matter if something isn't true, because eventually it will be!'" *South,* Jan. 1983, p. 22.

9. It is illuminating to see how García Márquez can be read in Latin America. When he decided he would not publish another book until Pinochet quit as Chile's president, political prisoners at a detention camp near Valparaiso decided to give him a gift: "They would recreate *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in popular verse—the traditional form of verses of ten lines each. The book would be illustrated with woodcuts, a technique used by Chilean popular engravers since the nineteenth century. The wood came from used tea chests. The only tool was a small knife made from an old metal saw. The inking roll was an empty shampoo bottle filled with sand." One woodcut, done by historian Leonardo Leon, shows Innocent Erendira's wicked grandmother being carried by skeletons who represent "the exploitation of the ill-fed, ill-clothed masses." Interview, ibid., p. 23.

10. García Márquez says, "I know very ordinary people who've read *One Hundred Years* . . . carefully and with a lot of pleasure, but with no surprise at all because, when all is said and done, I'm telling them nothing that hasn't happened in their own lives." *The Fragrance of Guava,* p. 36.

11. García Márquez claims that "the multiple monologue allows several unidenti-

fied voices to interrupt, just as it happens in real history. For example, think of those massive Caribbean conspiracies, full of endless secrets which everyone knows about." *Fragrance of Guava,* p. 86.

12. I owe this point to Ruth Frankenburg who develops it in her essay "The Challenge of *Orientalism* for Feminist Theory" (1984; unpublished).

13. Edward Said, "In the Shadow of the West," *Wedge* 7/8 (Winter/Spring 1985), p. 4.

14. Alejo Carpentier describes hearing an illiterate black poet recite "the wonderful story of Charlemagne in a version similar to that of the *Song of Roland*" in a small fishing village on the Caribbean coast, and points out how the search for an "authentic" regional essence reveals that a "particular folkloric dance was only the contemporary manifestation of an age-old ritual or liturgy which . . . had travelled from the Mediterranean to the New World via Africa," or that "a peasant folksong was almost word for word an old frontier ballad from the days of the Moorish occupation of Spain," or how a researcher recently heard "peasants deep in the Cuban interior reciting past Hindustani eulogies to Count Lucanor and even a version of *King Lear.*" "The Latin American Novel," *New Left Review* 154 (Nov./Dec. 1985), pp. 100, 106.

15. Geeta Kapur, "Art and Internationalism," *Economic and Political Weekly,* 13 May 1978, p. 803.

16. García Márquez, interview in *South,* p. 22.

17. Francoise Grund also discusses the artistry of many third world performances that "rests assuredly in the interpretative quality of repetition" in contrast to western theater which is "based on the sudden discovery of the unknown, the 'taking' of the spectator by surprise. The western artist and dramatist must be a master of surprise, must be a perpetual innovator, a novelist." "Ali Baba's Cave," *Semiotext(e)* 4:3 (1984), pp. 55–56.

18. Like a slowed-down whirl of the leaf storm, the story revolves around the death of the doctor through repeated narratives. The arrival of the banana company is perceived as a leaf storm which rearranges the human and material "dregs" and "rubble" of other towns into a "different and more complex town." García Márquez, *Leaf Storm and Other Stories,* trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 1.

19. C. V. Subbarao writes: "It is through oral traditions that the peasants preserve their history. . . . History is for them not discontinuous. Each insurgency brings not only fresh history but also fresh ways of remembering and preserving it. And it is a history as remembered by them that can help change history. The peasant is thus not only the subject of history but also a historian, presumably with his own historiography." Unpublished review of Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency,* 1984. See also Jean Franco on the radical role of oral narratives, especially for the Indians in Latin America, in "Dependency Theory and Literary History: the Case of Latin America," *Minnesota Review* 5 (Fall 1975), pp. 68–69.

20. García Márquez, *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold,* trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1983), p. 96; further citations from this work will be included in the text.

21. See James Clifford, "Power and Dialogue in Ethnography," in *Observers Observed: Essays in Ethnographic Fieldwork,* ed. George Stocking (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), p. 147.

22. For instance, the representation of gender in the female nude is a crucial site for the management and mystification of class and cultural differences. Thus in the "everyday" nudes of Degas, only the covert voyeurism of the painter's eye can ensure and establish the "naturalness" of the woman, her pristine self-absorption. Degas aimed in his bathing, dressing women to show "a human creature preoccupied with herself—

a cat who licks herself; hitherto, the nude has always been represented in poses which presuppose an audience, but these women of mine are honest and simple folk, unconcerned by any other interests than those involved in their physical condition. . . . It is as if you looked through a keyhole." *Post-Impressionism* (London: Royal Academy of the Arts, 1979), p. 64.

23. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 19.

24. Ibid., pp. 111–12.

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Increasingly published, translated, and studied during the last quarter of the twentieth century, Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) is a singular German critic of literature and history whose heterodox writings are fed by, among other sources, Jewish thought and Frankfurt School Marxism.

The central figure in structural anthropology and perhaps the most important theorist and practitioner of structuralism, Claude Lévi-Strauss is a French intellectual whose influence on the study of narrative has been pervasive.

The Viennese founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) has shaped modern thought and culture in a profound and permanent way.

Hungarian intellectual and activist Georg Lukács (1885–1971), perhaps the most original and important Marxist theorist of the twentieth century, is also the central figure in Marxist aesthetics.

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Spanish Civil War and is arguably the most important Spanish thinker of the twentieth century.

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